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The Merchant Community of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1660-1750

Lawrence Robert Robinson

Abstract

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This thesis examines how the social and cultural experience of becoming and being a merchant in early modern Newcastle upon Tyne contributed towards the formation of a merchant community in the town during the period 1660-1750. Chapters are arranged to broadly reflect stages in the lifecycle, beginning with apprenticeship, followed by housing, the acquisition of material goods and political participation. Chapter One offers an introduction to the topics covered and cites the thesis in the historiography as well as discussing the main primary sources used throughout. Chapter Two shows how apprenticeship brought youths to Newcastle and argues that this training provided the first critical stage of assimilation into the merchant community, teaching them the nature of urban life together with the mercantile culture of work. Chapter Three continues the apprenticeship theme with an in-depth look at the ways in which enrolments to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers changed between 1600 and 1750, in terms of overall numbers and with respect to the social background of recruits and their pattern of migration (briefly extending the thesis chronology to highlight important long-term change). Chapter Four is concerned with merchant housing and uses the 1665 Hearth Tax to create a detailed picture of how merchant properties compared in size and location to the town as a whole. The use of domestic space is also considered and connected to the bourgeois values of sociability, respectability and dignity. Chapter Five continues this topic with a look at material culture. Urban life was associational in nature and this chapter will argue that material culture had a key role in developing a broader urban bourgeois culture between towns and regions. Chapter Six examines the political participation of Newcastle merchants and shows the extent of the control they held over the town corporation and considers the implications this had for social relations between the merchant community and the rest of the town population. Chapter Seven concludes the thesis and stresses the need to re-evaluate the role provincial merchants had in the development of society and culture across the early modern period.

The Merchant Community of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1660-1750

Lawrence Robert Robinson
Department of History
Submitted to Durham University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
2018

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Abbreviations

AA	*Archaeologia Aeliana*
BI	Borthwick Institute, University of York
BL	British Library
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*
CSPCS, A&WI	*Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America & West Indies*
DUL, DPR	Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections Durham Probate Records
EcHR	*Economic History Review*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
NC	*Newcastle Courant*
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition
P&P	*Past & Present*
TA	Teesside Archives, Middlesbrough
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
T&WA	Tyne & Wear Archives, Discovery Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne

Conventions

All dates are given as old style but have been adjusted so the year begins on 1 January.

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Map 0.1: Location map showing Newcastle upon Tyne and the northeast region.[1]

1 Reproduced from Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie, eds. *Economy and Culture in North-East England, 1500-1800* (Woodbridge, 2018), xxv.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Aims of the thesis

In the broadest terms this thesis offers a social history of the Newcastle upon Tyne merchant community between 1660 and 1750. More specifically, the social and cultural experience of being a merchant in Newcastle is brought to the surface to uncover what it meant to be part of this community and show how members were drawn into a discernible section of the town population through a shared approach to urban living. Since the emergence of the 'new social history' in the 1960s social relations within households and communities have received much attention from early modern historians working in a range of fields, most notably in the work of Keith Wrightson. Much of this research explores the 'nature and quality of social relations' and a recurring theme is the relationship between historical trends and how they impacted upon certain social groups—the 'class specific experience of social change.'[2] This thesis is rooted in this scholarship and contributes by placing merchants centre stage. Many excellent studies detail the expansion of English commerce across the early modern period but how merchants contributed to social and cultural change is given far less attention. In *The Politics of Trade* (2001) Gauci highlights this gap in the historiography, claiming that 'rarely has a holistic approach been taken to the career path of the merchant, both in his private and public capacities.'[3] The present study was conceived with this criticism in mind and this introduction will outline the approach it takes and how it builds on previous works.

Until the sixteenth century, 'merchant' was a term applied to anyone who bought and sold goods not manufactured by his or her hand; thereafter the meaning narrowed to imply wholesale traders, especially those dealing overseas.[4] A definition dating from 1631 typifies this more restrictive application, stating 'He is properly called a Marchant … who passeth over the Seas … and from thence transports merchandise or wares into his owne warehouse;

2 Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter, 'The Making of Early Modern English Social History', in *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England*, eds. Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (Woodbridge, 2013), 11, 23-25; Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982); Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470-1750* (London, 2002).

3 Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: the Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001), 5-7, 63.

4 *OED*, q.v. 'merchant'.

either bought for ready money, or had in exchange for other commodities which hee brings with him out of his owne Country.'[5] A 1706 definition similarly describes a merchant as 'a Trader, or Dealer by Whole-sale, especially in Commodities brought from Foreign Parts.'[6] Some effort was made to distinguish merchants from retailers. Writing in 1719, a Frenchman recalling his travels in England noted the 'Dispute about the Word *Marchand*; for because the *English* call no Body a *Marchand* but Wholesale Dealers, they can't bear that we should give the Name of *Marchands* to Retailers, who are call'd so in our Language.'[7] Despite such attempts to differentiate wholesaling from retailing, frequently they overlapped; furthermore, the definition of a merchant as one engaged in foreign trade often overlooked the fact that he might be equally, or indeed solely, concerned with internal trade.[8] Defoe actually makes this distinction in *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726), describing a tradesman as one engaged in the 'Inland trade of *England*' as opposed to the 'merchant who imports our merchandize from abroad'.[9] However, while separating involvement in inland and foreign trade was meaningful, in actuality a 'merchant' may have dealt wholesale in either.[10]

For the purposes of this study, 'merchant' is taken to mean, first and foremost, members of the companies of Merchant Adventurers and Hostmen in Newcastle upon Tyne. Both organisations will be explained more fully below; but, briefly, the former was composed of three guilds for dealers in grain (boothmen), woollen cloth (drapers) and general dry goods (mercers) while the Hostmen dealt in coal. Each company held the monopoly on their respective areas of trade within Newcastle which meant anybody wishing to enter either sector had to join their ranks. Taking membership of either company as the basis for inclusion in the study should therefore present a reasonably accurate picture of those who earned their living through trade. As members of each company traded internally and with foreign ports, the term 'merchant' is used throughout on the understanding that it describes both cases.

A key theme of the thesis is how merchants fitted in to Newcastle society and the notion of a 'community' helps achieve this. In the social sciences 'community' can simply be interpreted as meaning a group of people having something in common with each other that

5 Johannis Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Islands Adjacent* (London, 1631), 341.
6 Edward Phillips, *The New World of Words* (London, 1706), q.v. 'merchant'
7 M. Misson, *M. Misson's Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England*, trans. John Ozell (London, 1719), 284.
8 Richard Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1995), 11, 45.
9 Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman, in Familiar Letters* (Dublin, 1726), 252-253.
10 Grassby, *Business Community*, 11.

distinguishes them to a significant degree from other groups.[11] The appeal of the concept for historians is that it can be used to understand how groups associated though politics, religion, occupation and family; defined membership, organised themselves and interacted with other groups. Such an undertaking is considered 'vital to a full comprehension of the dynamics of change and continuity in early modern Europe.'[12] Historians of early modern England have similarly urged their peers to 'reinvigorate the concept' of community 'in order to examine the many different types of association and modes of communication in which people participated.'[13] The existence and significance of the social bonds that bound households, friends, families and neighbours into communities in seventeenth-century Newcastle is vividly brought to life in Wrightson's study of the town during the 1636 plague crisis. An estimated 47 percent of the town population died in the epidemic, yet from

> what we know of the response to the plague … in Newcastle confirms the power and resilience of the associational life of the city; of the bonds of family and civil society amongst people brought up, as the schoolmaster Richard Mulcaster put it, "not to live alone, but amongst others."[14]

Community is a word that carries notions of accord and confraternity with evident good reason, but conflict is an intrinsic part of communities which are the product of a 'series of mediated relationships.'[15] People often belong to several communities and where these meet and overlap group identities are tested and shaped which can result in conflict in the process of acceptance or rejection.[16]

The merchant community as a unit of research is valid for several reasons. Above all the guilds merchants were required to join in order to trade from within the boundaries of their town drew them together through a shared purpose. Writing of the Bristol Merchant Venturers Sacks argues that a 'spirit of community' existed amongst members as decisions were made collectively whilst permanent commitments brought merchants together for a common purpose.[17] Regulations defining membership also fostered links between merchants who were expected to conform to a specific set of rules. Overall the company gave

11 Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London, 1989), 12.

12 Karen E. Spierling and Michael J. Halverson, 'Introduction: Definitions of Community in Early Modern Europe', in *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Karen E. Spierling and Michael J. Halverson (Abingdon, 2016), 1.

13 Phil Withington and Alexandra Shephard, 'Introduction: Communities in Early Modern England', in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, eds. Alexandra Shephard and Phil Withington (Manchester, 2000), 5.

14 Keith Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer: A Scrivener, His City and the Plague* (New Haven and London, 2011), 160 and 47 which adds: 'it is clear that the city fathers acted vigorously to preserve their community.'

15 Withington and Shephard, 'Introduction', 6.

16 Spierling and Halverson, 'Introduction', 7-22.

coherence to leading merchants as 'a local elite'.[18] King's work on sociability in early modern Durham and Newcastle further highlights the role guilds had in fostering communal bonds between members, and her conclusion that clubs and societies modelled themselves on guilds holds significance for this thesis.[19] Like guilds, clubs prioritised fraternity, order, harmony and pride in their organisation and it was precisely these qualities the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers tried to promote between members.[20] Credit relations were another reason merchants were drawn together, acting as a 'binding force' for those cooperating and competing in the marketplace.[21] Support for this can be found in Muldrew's argument that the market in early modern England constituted 'a moral economy'. In the moral economy people were 'constantly involved in tangled webs of economic and social dependency' that were 'based only on each other's word'.[22] Trust and personal bonds thus held great value and were particularly important for merchants to establish and maintain as their livings were derived from buying and selling in the marketplace.

Important as personal bonds and trust were to credit relations, these values were fundamental to social relations amongst the 'middling sort' and therefore applicable more broadly. Generally speaking, the 'middling sort' refers to the section of the early modern population sandwiched between the gentry and the labouring classes.[23] They had to work for their living, either with their hands as yeoman or artisans or by their skills in business as merchants or in a profession for which they had trained, such as an apothecary or an attorney.[24] Addressing the House of Commons in 1761, William Beckford leaves us this definition: 'When I talk of the Sense of the People … I mean the Middling People in England —the Manufacturer, the Yeoman, the Merchant, the Country Gent[lema]n, they who bear all the heat of the day, and pay all Taxes to supply all the Expenses of Court and Government'.[25] As Beckford indicates, merchants were very much part of the middling sort. However, as the term covers such a varied slice of early modern society, this thesis favours seeing Newcastle

17 David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (Berkeley, 1991), 68-72, 89-101.
18 Ibid., 87-89.
19 Rebecca Frances King, 'Aspects of Sociability in the North East of England 1600-1750', Durham University PhD thesis (2001).
20 Ibid., 322.
21 Sacks, *Widening Gate*, 72.
22 Craig Muldrew, 'Interpreting the Market: The Ethics of Credit and Community Relations in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 18, 2 (1993), 163-183; Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998).
23 Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996), 15.
24 Jonathan Barry introduction to *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke, 1994), 2-3.
25 Quoted in Paul Langford, 'William Pitt and Public Opinion, 1757', *EHR*, 88, 346 (1973), 55-56.

merchants as part of the bourgeoisie. Doing so helps position merchants in an *urban* context as part of the urban middle class, distinct from yeomen, country gents, and the like; it also signifies their upper position within the middling sort. This is not to overlook the scale of wealth found within the Newcastle merchant community; chapters on housing and material culture will clearly show fortunes varied considerably. But thinking of merchants as, or aspiring to be, part of the bourgeoisie underlines the crucial urban context and reflects the elevated social position many merchants enjoyed in Newcastle.

The term offers further benefits. Barry argues that 'association' was central to the value system of the early modern bourgeoisie, as it underpinned their collectivism, and this is a key point to draw out in any study of community.[26] Bourgeois collectivism was vital for defusing economic tensions, most notably with the guilds, and forging a civic identity to counter the potentially destabilising effects of urban flux created as people migrated between towns.[27] The period 1550-1780 is often regarded as a time of crisis for urban associations following the religious pluralism of the Reformation and the supposed growing economic irrelevance of guilds and the rise of oligarchy. Yet for Barry such challenges to collectivism were met with a new surge of sociability and concern to preserve the family and household in the face of mounting disorder.[28] The bourgeoisie was not homogenous but a common thread from the merchant to the 'humble artisan' was the ability to act collectively which enabled individuals to 'make the most of urban life.' Values of order and respectability were also shared by the bourgeoisie with gentility adopted as a way of 'regularising relations within the civic community.'[29] Material culture had a crucial role to play here. Qualities like dignity, sociability and respectability were highly valued and pursuing urban life in a certain fashion and acquiring specific material goods were vital components of bourgeois collectivism and directly linked to promoting notions of community.

Many of Barry's points are relevant to Wrightson's discussion of 'relationships of mutuality and obligation'. These relationships cemented ties between families, households, kin, friends and guilds; they were ubiquitous and made society 'legible' and evoked a strong sense of identity through obligation to others.[30] The late seventeenth century was, however, a period of economic change which placed considerable strain on relationships of mutuality

26 Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort', in *The Middling Sort*, eds. Barry and Brooks, 84-112.
27 Ibid., 90-92.
28 Ibid., 97-98.
29 Ibid., 103-107.
30 Keith Wrightson, 'Mutualities and Obligations: Changing Social Relationships in Early Modern England', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 139 (2006), 163-165, 176.

and obligation. English society was becoming more urbanised and commercial, increasingly interconnected and engaged with a larger world. Traditional open hospitality of the gentry became more discriminatory whilst guild sociability declined and litigation increased.[31] Yet other relationships were strengthened. Parish identity was under threat but the parish was reinvented as a unit of local government and chief inhabitants fostered new forms of corporate identity that was articulated through participation in local office.[32] A new sense of 'cultural community' was developing amongst urban elites and overall people responded to the changing social and economic environment by forming new bonds of collective identity.[33] Houses were, for instance, embedded in the social process and declared the owners were connected to others who shared their awareness of a 'stylistic repertoire that was both national and specific to certain social groups.'[34]

The arguments of Barry and Wrightson have much to offer this thesis. Merchants were a key occupational group of the bourgeoisie and the aim here is to take the idea of a merchant community as a unit of research and use it to ask how notions of collectivism were fostered and strengthened through an approach to urban life. The study is structured as six chapters that broadly reflect stages in the lifecycle. Arranging the chapters in this manner imparts a sense of chronology to the study and, more importantly, demonstrates how the merchant community had relevance over the course of the lifetime. Chapter Two begins with apprenticeship. Apprenticeship brought youths into the merchant community and helped them form their identities as merchants. It socialised them into urban life and, because apprentice merchants were invariably male, taught them what it meant to be head of a household. During his training the apprentice learnt how to negotiate the complex web of credit relations through which his master conducted business. Doing so highlighted the value of trust and reputation and taught the youth the importance of fostering social bonds with fellow merchants. An element of negotiation characterised the master-apprentice relationship and this will also be explored, particularly in terms of the assimilation of the apprentice into the household of his master.[35] Chapter Three continues with apprenticeship and charts how admissions to the Merchant Adventurers changed in the period 1600-1750. Extending the chronology of the thesis brings to light the crucial long term trend that saw the social and

31 Ibid., 178-179; King, 'Aspects of Sociability'.
32 Wrightson, 'Mutualities', 174-184.
33 Ibid., 186.
34 Ibid., 193; Adrian Green, 'Houses in North-Eastern England: Regionality and the British Beyond, c.1600-1750', in *Archaeologies of the British: Explorations of Identity in Great Britain and its Colonies 1600-1945*, ed. Susan Lawrence (London, 2003), 55-75; Adrian Green, 'Houses and Households in County Durham and Newcastle c.1570-1730' Durham University PhD thesis (2000).
35 Wrightson, 'Mutualities', 171.

geographical base of recruits shrink with the result that the merchant community became less socially diverse.

An apprentice could not marry during his training and customarily lived-in with his master, meaning setting up a household of his own had to wait until he was a time-served freeman. Apprenticeship was, in this sense, a 'proving ground for the independent head of household'.[36] As will be seen in Chapter Two, self-control and obedience to others were values the Merchant Adventurers tried to instil in their apprentices, and these same values were central to the associational life of the bourgeoisie; 'the practice of associational life, writes Barry, provided the bourgeoisie 'with a constantly renewed experience and representation of how to manage their lives in accord with these values.'[37] Sociability was a key part of the associational life of the bourgeoisie and this topic will be explored as part of a discussion of material culture. Chapter Four begins with an analysis of housing and it will be seen how merchants were distinguished from large sections of the Newcastle population in the size and location of their properties. Chapter Five switches focus to the domestic furnishings and argues that merchants aspired to a wider bourgeois culture of 'dignity'. This 'cultural community' was rooted in a shared approach to urban living that reinforced existing relationships and created new ones in a way that drew Newcastle merchant households closer to other urban elites and distanced them from less affluent households in their town. Chapter Six ends with a study of political participation, which by and large came after merchants had become householders and established themselves in their chosen career. After exploring the extent to which merchants controlled the Newcastle corporation, using charity as an example it will be asked how the uneven distribution of power conditioned social relations between the merchant community and the rest of the town.

Whilst the thesis consists of a study of the merchants in a single English town over the course of a century, it offers more than a local history and does not overlook continuity with the medieval period. Early modern Europe contained a shared urban dimension which means claims about one town hold significance for other locations.[38] Particularly relevant for this study is the tendency for many European towns to feature merchants in their social elites. These elites dominated urban wealth, politics and culture and in many instances were a

36 Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism?', 102.

37 Ibid., 101.

38 Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe 1500-1700* (London, 1998), v; Patrick O'Brien 'Reflections and Meditations on Antwerp, Amsterdam and London in their Golden Ages' in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London*, eds. Patrick O'Brien et al. (Cambridge, 2001), 7.

medieval legacy.[39] As commerce expanded, those earning a living from trade acquired independent socio-political status as their wealth challenged traditional powers and established sources of credit.[40] Newcastle was one such town that inherited its merchant class from the medieval period. Newcastle developed as a wool port in the Middle Ages and functioned as an important regional centre for trade and distribution. Durham Cathedral Priory was, for example, a 'major market for luxury goods' that had become centred on Newcastle by the late fifteenth century.[41] Indeed, that the Priory relied so heavily on Newcastle for its provisions has led some to claim that the town was an exception to the economic decline seen in other eastern ports, like Hull and York.[42] Although evidence for this particular claim is rather patchy, it is clear that late medieval Newcastle had a large number of merchants trading overseas and importing a variety of goods for consumers in the northeast region. If medieval Newcastle did experience economic recession, its merchants innovated and diversified to accommodate changing patterns of trade so successfully that when the town reinvented itself from an exporter of wool to an exporter of coal in the early modern period, merchants spearheaded this development, not just economically but socially and politically. That merchants were able to do so highlights the medieval roots of their prosperity; indeed, as Wade notes with reference to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers, 'that association's successes in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries surely owed a great deal to the tradition of commercial expertise preserved against the odds by merchants of the late Middle Ages.'[43]

On a larger scale, but in a comparable manner, as the Dutch entered their 'golden age' after the 1590s it was the merchants who came to dominate the wealth and culture of urbanised western Holland.[44] In each case the importance of the urban setting is apparent and

39 Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1998), Ch. 2; Peter Borsay, introduction to *The Eighteenth-Century Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1688-1820*, ed. Peter Borsay (Harlow, 1990), 13-14. With respect to London Rogers claims that by the Hanoverian era the 'great merchants' of London made up part of the 'heterogeneous but unified ruling class'. Whilst true enough, this should not obscure the historical precedents. See: Nicholas Rogers, 'Money, Land and Lineage: The Big Bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London', *Social History*, 4, 3 (1979), 454. Cf. Henry Horwitz, '"The Mess of the Middle Class" Revisited: the Case of the "Big Bourgeoisie" of Augustan London', *Continuity and Change*, 2, 2 (1987), 263-296; a study of Augustan London that finds some merchants who had profited from the expansion of commerce after the Civil War actively eschewed civic office.

40 Martha C. Howell, *Commerce Before Capitalism in Europe, 1300-1600* (Cambridge, 2010), 1-6; Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (London, 2002), 12-16.

41 M. Threlfall-Holmes, 'The Import Merchants of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1464-1520: Some Evidence from Durham Cathedral Priory', *Northern History*, 40, 1 (2003), 81.

42 Ibid., 82-84.

43 J. F. Wade, 'The Overseas Trade of Newcastle Upon Tyne in the Later Middle Ages', *Northern History*, 30, 1 (1994), 48.

44 Maarten Prak trans. Diane Webb, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age*, (Cambridge, 2005), 134.

demonstrates the significance of merchants as a historical subject. As part of a European urban system, this thesis is taking Newcastle as an opportunity to magnify a small section of a large and detailed canvas.

1.2 Historiography

Recent historiographical trends show merchants continue to receive attention from scholars, particularly with respect to their connection to the organisation and expansion of early modern trade and commerce.[45] Research into the social history of commerce takes place on a smaller scale and forms a distinct body of scholarship that is enlightening for showing how mercantile interests became identified with national prosperity after the mid-seventeenth century.[46] Glaisyer, for instance, demonstrates how a 'culture of commerce' partly constructed through print developed between 1660 and 1720 as the public's interest in mercantile affairs increased and merchants, long viewed with suspicion, became more celebrated. Commerce was packaged and presented to the public in images like the Royal Exchange which was seen to represent 'the world of trade in miniature.'[47] Another key contribution to the social history of commerce is made by Muldrew who, as we have seen, argues that the early modern market constituted 'a moral economy'.[48] Many lines of enquiry flow from his conclusions and one particularly pressing for this thesis is the need to offset the voluminous work on established economic problems such as overseas trade, industry, prices

45 Thomas Leng, 'Interlopers and Disorderly Brethren at the Stade Mart: Commercial Regulations and Practices Amongst the Merchant Adventurers of England in the Late Elizabethan Period', *EHR*, 69, 3 (2016), 823-843; Thomas Leng, '"Corporate Constitutionalism", the Merchant Adventurers, and Anglo-European Interaction', *Itinerario*, 39, 1 (2015), 509-512; Sheilagh Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade: Merchant Guilds, 1000-1800* (Cambridge, 2011); Regina Grafe and Oscar Gelderblom, 'The Rise and Fall of Merchant Guilds: Re-thinking the Comparative Study of Commercial Institutions in Premodern Europe', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40, 4 (2010), 477-511; David Omrod, 'Agrarian Capitalism and Merchant Capitalism: Tawney, Dodd, Brenner and Beyond', in *Landlords and Tenants in Britain, 1440-1660: Tawney's Agrarian Problem Revisited*, ed. Jane Whittle (Woodbridge, 2013), 200-215; C. Knick Harley, 'Trade: Discovery, Mercantilism and Technology', in *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, vol. 1, *Industrialisation, 1700-1860*, eds. Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (Cambridge, 2004), 175-203; G. Alan Metters, 'Corn, Coal and Commerce: Merchants and Coastal Trading in Early Jacobean King's Lynn', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 23, 1 (2011), 149-178. A slightly older work that remains influential is Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton, 1993). Brenner argues that in the 1640s a group of 'new merchants' frustrated with the King sided with the parliamentary opposition and infiltrated the old royalist City elite. These men were radical in their religious and political outlook and their influence at Westminster encouraged a more aggressive imperialist policy overseas, particularly against the Dutch and the Spanish. The result was England's eventual emergence as a key commercial power in global trade.

46 David Ormrod, review of Natasha Glaisyer, *The Culture of Commerce in England, 1660-1720* (Woodbridge, 2006) in *EHR*, 61, 2 (2008), 500.

47 Glaisyer, *Culture of Commerce*, 185.

48 Muldrew, 'Interpreting the Market'; Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*.

and so on with research into everyday social relations.[49] In *The Widening Gate* Sacks uses Bristol as the basis for a 'local history of capitalism' which concentrates specifically on the merchant community of overseas traders in the town. Sacks demonstrates the importance of seeing wider economic shifts bringing about local political and social change and through the merchant community we see how the social order became increasingly hierarchical and the civic government less open and more integrated into the national state. Overall the transition to capitalism, which he sees as not so much a 'single system or organization' as a 'language — a set of gestures, signs, and meanings linked together by grammar, syntax, and logic' that constitutes a 'distinct point of view', is epitomised in the rise and success of the Bristol Merchant Venturers.[50]

Further research on the social history of commerce is provided by Gauci, mentioned above with regards his call for historians to take a more holistic approach to the career path of merchants. Gauci's main area of interest is the overseas merchants in the City of London and his attempt to 'integrate the economic, social and political experiences of this dynamic group' is a welcome approach to the early modern merchant.[51] In *The Politics of Trade* (2001) he concentrates on the period 1660-1720 and argues that London overseas merchants developed economic and social networks that can be used to gain insight into the workings of the state. Central to his argument is the heightened priority afforded to economic affairs as English trade expanded after 1660. Merchants may not have seriously challenged the political domination of the landed sector or overturned the longstanding hostility held towards men of commerce, but their increased presence in parliamentary affairs, however modest, shows the Augustan period was 'an important stage in the changing relationship between the merchant classes and Parliament'.[52] Using Liverpool and York for comparison, he considers how merchants fitted in to these towns in terms of residential patterns and civic activity, emphasising the close relationship the latter had with business success.[53] Insightful as Gauci's research is, one critic makes the point that he overstates 1660 as a 'watershed' moment.[54] Work by Kermode on Hull, York and Beverley in the late Middle Ages is particularly helpful here as it indicates that at this earlier date merchants were already placed at the centre of urban society. They accumulated more capital than most and had a central role in developing

49 Muldrew, 'Interpreting the Market', 164.
50 Sacks, *Widening Gate*, xvi, 14-15.
51 Perry Gauci, *Emporium of the World: The Merchants of London 1660-1800* (London, 2007), 2.
52 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 10-12, 180-188, 203-204, 223-233. See also Perry Gauci, 'The Clash of Interests: Commerce and the Politics of Trade in the Age of Anne', *Parliamentary History*, 28, 1 (2009), 115-125.
53 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 95.
54 Phil Withington, review of Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade* in *Urban History*, 30, 3 (2003), 418-420.

and managing an urban *mentalité*, whether responding to popular needs or imposing their own.[55] In terms of civic activity, 'political success defined the merchant class to such a degree that, it could be argued, merchants became synonymous with urban privilege.'[56] A similar case can be made after 1660 which means a strong sense of continuity links the medieval and early modern periods with respect to the merchant presence in urban elites.

Continuity is a theme that resonates in the history of early modern Newcastle. Newcastle has been the focus of some excellent research in recent years. The economic life of the town is a popular topic and collective efforts reveal a strong thread of continuity as a prosperous medieval trading town reinvented itself as a predominantly coal town in the early modern period.[57] Much research has been directed towards the people who drew their livelihoods from the River Tyne, particularly water tradesmen such as the keelmen whose task it was to transport coal downstream from the staiths on the banks of the Tyne to ships awaiting at the river mouth.[58] With good cause a common theme in the literature is the pivotal role coal had in the Newcastle economy. Recent work by Burn on the occupational structure of Newcastle shows that whilst the town possessed 'a vast quantity and variety of trade' in the late seventeenth century, with large numbers of men transporting goods besides coal along the Tyne, 'the economic logic that underpinned all that was changing, for better or worse, was coal.'[59] What was changing was the demand for coal, and as the coal trade grew so too did the population, which doubled in the century after 1560 to reach 15,000 as people migrated to Newcastle to take up employment in the coal industry and the associated trades.[60] The industry and trade that grew up around the extraction and exportation of coal generated enormous wealth and many of the men profiting most were the merchants with whom this thesis is concerned. However, rather than examining merchants in terms of their economic lives, their approach to urban life is the prime focus. Taking this approach fills a gap in the literature on early modern Newcastle as most scholars discussing the town's merchants tend

55 Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, 2.

56 Ibid., 67.

57 Diana Newton and A. J. Pollard, eds. *Newcastle and Gateshead before 1700* (Chichester, 2009); William Lancaster and Robert Colls, eds. *Newcastle upon Tyne: A Modern History* (Chichester, 2001); Matthew Richard Greenhall, 'The Evolution of the British Economy: Anglo-Scottish Trade and Political Union, an Inter-Regional Perspective, 1580-1750', Durham University PhD thesis (2011).

58 J. M. Fewster, *The Keelmen of Tyneside: Labour Organisation and Conflict in the North-East Coal Industry, 1600-1830* (Woodbridge, 2011); Andy Burn, 'Seasonal Work and Welfare in an Early Industrial Town: Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1700, *Continuity and Change*, 32, 2 (2017), 157-182; Peter D. Wright, *Life on the Tyne: Water Trades on the Lower River Tyne in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, a Reappraisal* (Farnham, 2014).

59 Andy Burn, 'Work Before Play: The Occupational Structure of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1710', in *Economy and Culture in North-East England, 1500-1800*, eds. Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie (Woodbridge, 2018), 125, 135.

60 Ibid., 134-135.

to do so through a wider interest in trade. Questions concerning the social history of Newcastle merchants are more commonly posed than answered in detail. Ellis, for example, has researched social relations in Newcastle during the period 1660-1760 and concludes that the uneven distribution of wealth and status 'accentuated social differentiation between an unusually restricted elite and the vast, quasi-proletarian multitude of the poor'—estimated to make up three-quarters of the town population in the 1660s—but does not set out to explore how this unbalanced social structure was experienced in daily life.[61] Elsewhere her informative study of the leading local coal merchant William Cotesworth is primarily concerned with his business dealings rather than with his life outside of the coal trade.[62]

Merchant culture in Newcastle is explored in Graves' article that uses architectural evidence to support her claim that in seventeenth-century Newcastle the merchant elite tried to enforce their authority by building scripture into the physical environment of the properties they occupied, aiming to present themselves as 'watchmen' over fellow townsfolk.[63] For present concerns Graves' article is useful for drawing attention to the connection between architecture and the merchant elite but she does not offer broad conclusions on the development of the merchant community as a whole, as this thesis does. Certain Newcastle merchant families have been singled out by historians for special attention on account of their elite status, and whilst informative, by design only offer a partial picture of the merchant community as it was experienced by a minority.[64]

A notable exception to the aforementioned studies is Howell's work on Newcastle during the Civil War. Howell shows that during the seventeenth century the corporation was dominated by an 'inner ring' of merchants who successfully defended their position despite much opposition, even retuning to power with the Restoration following their dispersal during the conflict.[65] Howell provides much insight into the merchant domination of the Newcastle government and as well as building on this body of work and extending its chronology up to 1750, this study will show how this political domination conditioned social

61 Joyce Ellis, 'A Dynamic Society: Social Relations in Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1660-1760', in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1984), 97.

62 Joyce Ellis, 'A Study of the Business Fortunes of William Cotesworth, c.1668-1726', Oxford University PhD thesis (1975); Joyce Ellis, 'A Bold Adventurer: the Business Fortunes of William Cotesworth, c.1688-1726', *Northern History*, 17, 1 (1981), 117-132.

63 C. Pamela Graves, 'Building a New Jerusalem: The Meaning of a Group of Merchant Houses in Seventeenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne, England', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 13 (2009), 385-408.

64 A. W. Purdue, *Merchants and Gentry in North-East England 1650-1830: The Carrs and the Ellisons* (Sunderland, 1999); A. W. Purdue, *The Ship That Came Home: The Story of a Northern Dynasty* (London, 2001).

65 Roger Howell, *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution: A Study of the Civil War in North England* (Oxford, 1967).

relations and was based on mutual expectations from both sides. The political history of Newcastle receives further attention in Wilson's *Sense of the People*, which examines the nature and extent of provincial political culture in the period 1715-85. Whilst the town's merchants are not her prime focus, her description of Newcastle's vibrant political culture invites further research into the social history of the merchants who were closely associated with the generation of politics in the town.[66]

1.3 Thesis chronology: Newcastle and the merchant community 1660-1750

The following four sections site the thesis in the period 1660-1750. The decision to study the merchant community in this timeframe was taken on the basis of the social and economic changes that came to fruition, or at least became more apparent, between these dates. Material progress in late seventeenth-century England was identified as a recent achievement by contemporaries and their awareness alerts us to the significance of the era.[67] Based around the broad themes of demographic growth, urbanisation, the expansion of trade and the role merchants had in local and national politics, the following sections explain how the development of Newcastle and its merchant community occurred amidst socio-economic and cultural shifts taking place on a national (and international) level. This approach elevates the study of a single town and gives it wider relevance by demonstrating how key themes in early modern historiography were experienced in provincial centres like Newcastle and how they in turn exerted an influence on the evolution of England as a whole.

1.3.1 Demographic change, rising real wages and the 'consumer revolution'

Demographic change is one of the most important themes of the early modern period. The sixteenth century had seen a remarkable upsurge in the population with an estimated rise of one third between the 1520s and 1580s. Such an increase exacerbated already rising prices

66 Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), Ch. 6 and Ch. 7.

67 Paul Slack, 'Material Progress and the Challenge of Affluence in Seventeenth-Century England', *EcHR*, 62, 3 (2009), 576-603; Paul Slack, 'The Politics of Consumption and England's Happiness in the Later Seventeenth Century', *EHR*, 122, 497 (2007), 609-631.

and marks the mid-sixteenth century out as a period of unprecedented inflation.[68] Overall the population of England had increased from 2.9 million to 5.2 million between 1550 and 1650, yet thereafter it began to stagnate, and following a slight decline in the late seventeenth century was only rising at a modest rate after 1700 to reach 5.7 million by 1750.[69] Whether rising, falling or stagnating, demographic trends have vital social and economic consequences and this means the period 1650-1750 warrants special attention; indeed, '[i]n demographic terms the century after 1650 represented a new era'.[70] One of the most significant consequences of the stagnating population was financial. The 'new era' witnessed the first rise in real incomes in over a century. Falling grain prices, fairly stable livestock and industrial prices and an absence of demographic pressure to offset rising real wages meant the daily struggle to feed a family had greatly eased by 1700.[71] Regional specialisation in agriculture also contributed by increasing output and as prices fell many consumers enjoyed greater spending power.[72] Now wage-earners had greater purchasing power for goods above those needed for basic sustenance, particularly urban middling households who enjoyed higher incomes from their involvement in commerce.[73]

This rise in purchasing power is a key ingredient in the so called 'consumer revolution' that has spawned a vast literature. The precise chronology and extent of change is the source of much dispute amongst historians, but Weatherill's finding that between 1660 and 1760 middling houses acquired consumer goods like linen, clocks, mirrors, china, tea paraphernalia, saucepans and so on in greater quantities and in more varieties demonstrates the main point.[74] Studies of early modern consumerism have not entirely overlooked merchants. Unfortunately most lump them in with larger social groupings, making it difficult

68 Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, Ch. 5.

69 E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), 531-533.

70 Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 120-129, 230.

71 Ibid., 230-231.

72 Ibid., 235; Ann Kussmaul, *A General View of the Rural Economy of England, 1538-1840* (Cambridge, 1990).

73 Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 231.

74 Though the literature on early modern consumption is ever expanding, the key arguments can be found in: Mark Overton et al., *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (Abingdon, 2004); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* (London, 1988); Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Project: the Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978); Neil McKendrick, 'The Consumer Revolution in Eighteenth-Century England', in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century* England, eds. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb (London, 1982); Maxine Berg, 'Consumption in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Cambridge Economic History*, eds. Floud and Johnson, 357-387; Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution*: *Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008).

to assess their individual contribution.[75] There are some enlightening local studies of material culture in Durham and Newcastle but again merchants are not considered as a group.[76] As well as providing this research in chapters Four and Five, the accompanying discussion aims to go beyond the consumer debate and evaluate merchants on their own terms, as opposed to assessing them in light of their contribution to the emergence of 'consumer society'. Households rather than individuals will be the point of reference to emphasise that families consumed as units rather than on an individual basis.[77]

Over the course of these chapters it becomes clear that Newcastle's merchants were at the forefront of changing approaches to urban living, connecting them to a wider bourgeois urban culture of politeness and respectability and highlighting their importance to the development of European culture. This goes to show that merchant households are not less significant than those of the gentry, whom it is often assumed they sought to emulate. Grassby, a prominent historian of the early modern business community, is one example, claiming that '[i]n contrast to the gentry merchants had a marginal interest in interior decoration and were less inclined to express their status through domestic artefacts. Their taste was usually conformist, functional and unrefined.'[78] Given merchants had an invested interest in the latest fashions and consumer trends by the nature of their occupation, this conclusion is surprising. Arguably it reflects the longstanding assumption that the gentry were of greater cultural significance than merchants. This idea can be traced to the mid-nineteenth century cultural counterrevolution which harked back to earlier times in opposition to the prevailing spirit of aggressive capitalism, celebrating harmony and stability

75 See, for example, Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*; Overton et al. *Production and Consumption*. Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Classes: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, 1989). Some aspects of merchant material culture in the early modern period (particularly housing) are discussed in the following: Chris King, '"Closure" and the Urban Great Rebuilding in Early Modern Norwich', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 44 (2010), 54-80; Chris King, 'The Interpretation of Urban Buildings: Power, Memory and Appropriation in Norwich Merchants' Houses, c. 1400-1660', *World Archaeology*, 41, 3 (2009), 471-488; Roger Leech, *The Town House in Medieval and Early Modern Bristol* (Swindon, 2014); Roger Leech, 'The Garden House: Merchant Culture and Identity in the Early Modern City', in *Archaeologies of the British*, ed. Susan Lawrence, 76-88.

76 Lorna Scammell, 'Was the North-East Different from other Areas? The Property of Everyday Consumption in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', in *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*, eds. Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot, 2004), 12-33; Helen Berry, 'Promoting Taste in the Provincial Press: National and Local Culture in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 25 (2002), 1-17; Gwendolynn Heley, 'The Material Culture of the Tradesmen of Newcastle upon Tyne 1545-1642: The Durham Probate Record Evidence', Durham University PhD thesis (2007); Judith Welford, 'Functional Goods and Fancies: The Production and Consumption of Consumer Goods in Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Durham c. 1680-1780', Durham University PhD thesis (2010). The dataset used in this study only contains three merchants making comparisons between other occupational groups unfeasible.

77 As advocated by John Brewer, 'The Error of Our Ways: Historians and the Birth of Consumer Society', Cultures of Consumption Working Paper Series, No. 12, delivered at The Royal Society, London, 23 September 2003.

78 Grassby, *Business Community*, 341.

over competition and idealising rural life in contrast to urban living. By promoting aristocratic values and styles of life, those engaged in business and trade were considered culturally inferior.[79] However, a recent collection of essays acknowledges the important role merchants had in the development of European material culture which demonstrates the business community is starting to attract some attention. As well as supporting this new trend this thesis stresses that the key to understanding merchants as consumers lies in wider socio-economic changes which greatly benefitted middling households engaged in the expanding world of commerce.[80]

One additional way the Newcastle merchant community was affected by demographic change is less dramatic but had a very significant impact on the town nonetheless. Apprenticeship was the traditional means by which youths entered a wide range of skilled occupations and Chapter Two explores how the institution provided the merchant community with new recruits. The emphasis is on the crucial social aspect of the training process. Learning the skills of the merchant was one thing but apprenticeship offered youths the crucial socialisation into the values of the profession and taught them what it meant to be an urban citizen and head of a household (merchant apprentices being overwhelmingly male). Chapter Three continues with a statistical analysis of how apprentice enrolments to the Company of Merchant Adventurers changed in the period 1600-1750. The main findings are that numbers declined whilst the social background of recruits contracted, with more and more gentlemen apprenticing their sons to Newcastle merchants to the cost of those further down the social scale. The geographical origin of apprentices also shrank as long-distance migration became less common. Demographic change was a crucial factor behind these changing patterns of recruitment. A boom in urban apprenticeship took place as England's population expanded between 1550 and 1650 which raised the value of agricultural produce and acted as a push factor for yeomen and husbandmen to send their children to be apprenticed in the towns.[81] However, in the century after 1650, the stagnating population was accompanied by high mortality and low fertility rates which placed smallholders in a less competitive situation when it came to funding apprenticeships for their children. Making matters worse, the cost of apprenticeship was also rising. Consequently, as the push factor

79 Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (London, 1981), 6-10, 46-48.

80 Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster introduction to *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London and New York, 2017), 22.

81 Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social Mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800', in *Middling Sort*, eds. Barry and Brooks, 69-71.

reduced the typical town drew more apprentices from its own population and hinterland with the result that long-distance migration became less common.[82]

1.3.2 Urbanisation and the 'urban renaissance'

That a town like Newcastle was increasingly able to recruit apprentices from its own population points to another important theme of the 'new era': urbanisation. In spite of a stagnating national population, many urban centres expanded to the point where the proportion of people living in English towns increased from 17 percent in 1650 to 25 percent a century later.[83] Newcastle saw its population grow from around 16,000 to 29,000 between these dates, confirming its place alongside Bristol, Norwich and Exeter as a leading provincial centre.[84] For Borsay urban growth after 1660 was so marked it constituted an 'urban renaissance' as English towns rejuvenated and transformed into bustling centres for business and pleasure. Regional capitals like Newcastle were able to 'exploit rich seams' as the demand for 'high-status social and consumer services' increased and the affluent engaged in 'conspicuous consumption' in elegant surroundings.[85] By the 1780s Newcastle boasted new assembly rooms, theatres and public baths together with a range of venues for leisure and cultural pursuits, including coffeehouses, lending libraries and bookshops.[86] The link to London provided by the coal trade also helped by transmitting the latest metropolitan fashions to Newcastle.[87] Further evidence of the urban renaissance in Newcastle is provided by Wilson in her study of political culture and in King's research into the sociability of Durham and Newcastle guilds, respectively illustrating Newcastle's vibrant political scene and its expanding range of facilities for leisure and socialising.[88] Green also draws attention to the large houses that Newcastle acquired in the seventeenth century as the governing class took up residence in the town following a new emphasis on county towns as 'pivotal to centre-locality authority structures'.[89] Rather than melding into the uniformed polite urban scene these houses were intended to display the political weight of the owner. Grey Friars

82 Ibid.
83 Christopher Chalkin, *The Rise of the English Town, 1650-1850* (Cambridge, 2001), 5, 8.
84 Paul Slack, 'Great and Good Towns 1540-1700', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2, *1540-1840*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge, 2000), 353; Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 194.
85 Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), 16-30.
86 Berry, 'Promoting Taste'.
87 A. W. Purdue, 'Newcastle in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Northern History*, 50, 2 (2013), 272-284.
88 Wilson, *Sense of the People*; King, 'Sociability'.
89 Adrian Green, 'The Big House in the English Provincial Town', in *The English Urban Renaissance Revisited*, eds. John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (Cambridge, 2018), 116-143.

mansion, purchased by the merchant and Newcastle MP Sir William Blackett in 1675, is a prime example, its scale and splendour far outstripping all other properties in the town.[90] Although the idea of an urban renaissance beginning in 1660 should not obscure its historical roots, the concept rightly draws attention to the century after the Restoration as a period of pronounced cultural and social change in Newcastle. As leading contributors to this change, merchants invite the detailed study of their housing and material culture provided in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

1.3.3 The expansion of trade in Newcastle

The idea of an 'urban renaissance' is also instructive when it connects expanding national trade to urban development and rising consumer demand. Whilst regional specialisation had an important role in urbanisation by enabling more of the labour force to move into non-agricultural occupations, the dynamic underlying the growth of the urban system lay in trade and industry.[91] For some time the concept of a 'commercial revolution' was used to describe how England's share of global trade changed in the period 1660-1760, and whilst the idea of a 'revolution' is now downplayed, there can be no doubt that, compared to a century earlier, by the 1750s the nation was importing and exporting a far greater variety of goods to and from a much broader range of destinations.[92]

Overall the total value of England's annual trade is estimated to have grown from £8.5 million in 1660 to £20.1 million by the 1750s. The distribution of this wealth went beyond the few thousand merchants directly engaged in overseas trade. Those involved in the wider distribution of goods benefited while English ports experienced a generalised commercial advancement.[93] By the mid-seventeenth century Newcastle had long served as the distribution centre for the northeast and was one such port that gained from this economic growth, channelling manufactured and agricultural goods to the industrial labour force while profiting from its buoyant coastal and export trade.[94] Travelogues became a popular genre in the late seventeenth century and from them we can see visitors to Newcastle were struck by the vibrancy of a town energised by trade. In 1635 Sir William Brereton described Newcastle as 'the fairest and richest towne in England', inferior in wealth to no city save London and

90 Ibid.
91 Kussmaul, *General View*; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 235.
92 Ralph Davies, 'A Commercial Revolution: English Overseas in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', The Historical Association General Series, No, 64 (London, 1967), 1.
93 Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, 238.
94 Joyce Ellis, 'Regional and County Centres 1700-1840', in *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. 2, ed. Clark, 674.

Bristol while Marmaduke Rawdon, visiting in 1660, felt Newcastle was a 'towne of good trade' and complimented its 'very brood, longe, and commodious' quay.[95] Writing in 1722, John Macky was unenthusiastic about the 'irregularly built' streets and the numerous 'dirty Lanes' but nevertheless felt that 'next to *Bristol* … [Newcastle] may be called the greatest trading Town in *England*.'[96] In 1770 Newcastle was still considered 'the most flourishing and richest port in the north of England'.[97]

After London, Norwich and Bristol, Newcastle ranked fourth in the urban hierarchy and, as these writers acknowledge, this status was rooted in trade.[98] Success was deep rooted and during the 'new era' Newcastle remained what it had been for centuries, a trading and merchant town; 'an ideal example', according to Ellis, of 'Defoe's seaport towns "where Trade flourishes, as well foreign Trade and home Trade, and where Navigation, Manufacturing, and Merchandize seem to assist one another"'.[99] Trade had long enriched Newcastle and it is important to appreciate the continuity between the medieval and early modern periods. During the thirteenth century the quayside was created by reclamation and the exploitation of local coal seams was already attracting shipping to the town.[100] By the sixteenth century overseas trade was a staple feature of the town's commercial expansion, with outward cargoes usually consisting of wool with coal and lead used as ballast that could be sold at destination in Antwerp, Bruges, Middleburg and Bergen-op-Zoom.[101] Feeding the Newcastle population depended on importing foodstuffs which generated a busy coastwise trade. Some beer and groceries came from London but food was mostly returned from bigger provincial ports receiving coal from Newcastle. Barley, wheat, rye, peas and malt came from Hull while King's Lynn sent large quantities of grain, mostly rye. In return for the coal Ipswich received it sent wheat, malt, beans and butter.[102] Coastwise commerce such as this occupied a large proportion of the overall trade in Newcastle. Forty-two different destinations are listed in the port books as receiving shipments from Newcastle in 1702-3 which gives some idea of the vibrant coastal trade network within which the town was

95 John Crawford Hodgson, ed. *North Country Diaries*, Surtees Society, Second Series, vol. 124 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1914), 15; *The Life of Marmaduke Rawdon of York*, ed. Robert Davies, Camden Society, vol. 85, (1863), 131.

96 John Macky, *A Journey Through England*, vol. 2 (London, 1722), 216-217.

97 Nathaniel Spencer, *The Complete English Traveller* (London, 1771), 569.

98 Peter Clark, Part I introduction to *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. 2, ed. Clark, 27.

99 Purdue, 'Newcastle in the Long Eighteenth Century', 274; Joyce Ellis, 'The "Black Indies": The Economic Development of Newcastle, c.1700-1840', in *Newcastle upon Tyne*, eds. Colls and Lancaster, 2.

100 Wade, 'Overseas Trade of Newcastle Upon Tyne', 33.

101 Ibid., 35; Diana Newton, 'Newcastle and the World Beyond Tyneside, 1550-1650', in *Newcastle and Gateshead*, eds. Newton and Pollard, 287; Constance M. Fraser, 'The Economic Growth of Newcastle, 1080-1540', in *Newcastle and Gateshead*, eds. Newton and Pollard, 41-64.

102 T. S. Willan, *The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Manchester, 1976), 33.

engaged.[103] Even so, by a long way London represented the single largest domestic market for Newcastle at this time, with two-thirds of the 1,862 coastwise shipments made in 1706 destined for the capital.[104]

Coal accounted for the bulk of Newcastle exports with lead, glass, tallow, grindstones, woollen goods, ironmongery and butter making up most other outward shipments. Foreign trade was on a smaller scale by comparison and largely confined to ports in Holland and the western Baltic. Comparing data from the Newcastle port books gives a rough idea of the ratio of internal to overseas trade, showing in the year 1702-3 there were 2,280 outward coastal shipments compared to 760 overseas in 1698-9.[105] This dominance of coastwise trade should not be taken to mean Newcastle made little contribution to the expansion of national trade. Early in the eighteenth century several Newcastle merchants were operating extensive networks involving chains of contacts that stretched from Bordeaux to Narva on the Gulf of Finland and by the 1730s markets had also been established in North America and the Mediterranean.[106] Nevertheless, the nature of trade in Newcastle was very different to western ports like Bristol. Despite the tendency for early modern travellers to compare Newcastle to Bristol in the manner noted above, the latter's status as the foremost Atlantic port after London was based on the colonial trade and the redistribution of overseas imports.[107] Newcastle merchants dealt mostly in coal that was a high volume cargo of low value whereas Bristol cargoes tended to be lower in volume yet more valuable. Coal, therefore, imparted a special character to Newcastle trade in that a higher number of shipments were needed to move a cargo of a given value than was the case in Bristol.[108]

Coal had been shipped south from Tyneside from at least the thirteenth century. Until the early decades of the sixteenth century demand was not sufficient to warrant extensive investment in the region's coalfields. Exporting was usually done in an *ad hoc* manner as shipmasters included small amounts of coal as part of more valuable cargoes. However, after the mid-sixteenth century there was a sharp rise in output, with annual shipments from Newcastle increasing from around 50-60,000 tons in the 1560s to over 200,000 tons by the 1590s. By the 1670s annual output was in the region of 600,000 tons.[109] Contemporaries

103 Wright, *Life on the Tyne*, 115-119.
104 Ellis, '"Black Indies"', 3.
105 Wright, *Life on the Tyne*, 122.
106Ellis, '"Black Indies"', 3-4; William I. Roberts, 'Ralph Carr: A Newcastle Merchant and the American Colonial Trade', *Business History Review*, 42, 3 (1968), 271-287.
107 Sacks, *Widening Gate*, 19; Ellis, '"Black Indies"', 3.
108 Wright, *Life on the Tyne*, 113.
109 John Hatcher, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, vol. 1, *Before 1700* (Oxford, 1993), 250-251, 487-490, Ch. 12.

recognised this expansion as highly significant, with one poet enthusing that 'England's a perfect World; has *Indies* too/Correct your Maps; *Newcastle* is *Peru.*'[110] Urbanisation was a chief reason behind this upsurge in demand, particularly with respect to the growth of London. The population of London increased from approximately 200,000 in 1600 to 575,000 in 1700, reaching an estimated 900,000 by 1800. This remarkable expansion prompted many economic and technological changes throughout the country, not least the demand for energy.[111] By the seventeenth century coal was replacing wood as the domestic fuel of choice in the capital and this growing demand greatly increased the volume of shipments down the east coast. Meeting the requirements of the market meant an increasing number of families became dependent on the coal trade. Whether labouring as a carter, waggoner or heaver in the coalfield or earning a living from the expanding shipbuilding industry, the London coal trade created work, with national employment figures rising from 8,000 in 1650 to around 15,000 a century later. When dependent family members are included, between 1650 and 1750 the number directly dependent on the London coal trade doubled to 50,000.[112] Although on a smaller scale, Scotland was another important—yet often overlooked—market for the region's coal.[113] Greenhall's study of inter-regional trade demonstrates that the London coal trade, important as it was for Newcastle, was part of a complex trade network that stretched north as well as south. Coal in fact only constituted part of the cargoes that shipped to Scotland which means the northern market had greater economic significance for Newcastle than coal alone.[114] Nonetheless, it was the huge demand for coal in London that enabled Newcastle to boom in the late seventeenth century, a time when the national population was stagnating, and notably earlier than other English towns that developed in the eighteenth century.[115] Coal was the reason for Newcastle's status as a major late medieval port, a 'remarkable' feature of the town that distinguishes it from 'new ports' such as Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Liverpool and Whitehaven that grew to serve 'new regional industries'.[116]

1.3.4 Merchants and politics: the 'inner ring'

110 Anon., *Upon the Coalpits about Newcastle upon Tyne* (London, 1653).
111 E. A. Wrigley, 'A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy 1650-1750', *P&P*, 37 (1967), 44.
112 Ibid., 58-61.
113 Greenhall, 'Evolution of the British Economy', 307-308, 316-317.
114 Ibid., Ch.12.
115 E. A Wrigley, 'Urban Growth in Early Modern England: Food, Fuel and Transport', *P&P*, 225 (2014), 79-112.
116 Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie, '"Beyond Coal and Class": Economy and Culture in North-East England, 1500-1800', in *Economy and Culture*, eds. Green and Crosbie, 9.

The expansion of the coal trade had important social consequences for Newcastle. From the late sixteenth century there was a growing tendency for control of the coal industry to pass into the hands of an 'inner ring', a term used by Nef to describe the small group of local merchants that came to control the municipal government.[117] This 'inner ring' had their monopoly confirmed in 1600 when Newcastle was issued with a charter outlining a new system of government and a group of freemen whose historic duties were to 'host' merchant strangers and supervise the buying and selling of their merchandise received incorporation as the Company of Hostmen.[118] The creation of the company gave members the exclusive right to trade coal from Newcastle and any freemen wishing to enter the trade had to join their ranks and abide by their rules and regulations.[119] Being part of the 'inner ring' was strongly associated with membership to the Merchant Adventurers, the second merchant company in Newcastle. The Merchant Adventurers of England trace their origins to the turn of the fourteenth century and a charter confirming the rights of wool exporters to trade with Brabant.[120] One important feature of the society was the local branches comprised of merchants resident in towns that included York, Norwich, Exeter, Ipswich, Bristol, Hull, Chester and Newcastle. Each branch followed the model of the general fraternity with a court and officers but remained subservient to the jurisdiction of the general court.[121] The Newcastle branch formed in 1480 through an amalgamation of three guilds: one for mercers, a second for boothmen and a third for drapers. Boothmen were corn merchants by another name, with corn used at this time as a collective term for grain in general—wheat, rye, barley, oats, maize, and so on. Originally 'draper' referred to merchants of woollen cloth but by the sixteenth century a distinction had been made between retail drapers and merchant drapers. Retail drapers seem to have occupied an intermediary position between craftsmen and the merchant drapers who represented the earlier traders in woollen cloth and formed part of the

117 J. U. Nef, *The Rise of the British Coal Industry*, vol. 2 (London, 1932), 118-121.

118 Simon Healey, 'The Tyneside Lobby on the Thames: Politics and Economic Issues, c.1580-1630', in *Newcastle and Gateshead*, eds. Newton and Pollard, 219-240; Howell, *Puritan Revolution*, 35-40.

119 F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts from the Records of the Company of Hostmen of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Surtees Society, vol. 105 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1901), xiii.

120 Anne F. Sutton, 'The Merchant Adventurers of England: Their Origins and the Mercers' Company of London', *Historical Research*, 75, 187 (2002), 25-46; P. W. Klein, 'The Origins of trading Companies', in *Companies and Trade: Essays on Overseas Trading Companies during the Ancien Régime*, eds. Leonard Blussé and Femme Gaastra (Leiden, 1981), 23; Ogilvie, *Institutions*, 35-36.

121 W. E. Lingelbach, 'The Internal Organization of the Merchant Adventurers of England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, New Series, 16 (1902), 61.

Merchant Adventurers.[122] Mercers were traditionally 'general dealers' of dry goods though by the early modern period the term was used more concisely to refer to haberdashery.[123]

Each branch of the Merchant Adventurers operated as a regulated company. Regulated companies were very similar to guilds in that privileges were issued by the ruler to the company which controlled entry through admission fees but left its members to trade independently, albeit in accordance with a set of rules.[124] As members traded independently, regulated companies were fundamentally different to the other main trading organisation used in early modern economies, joint-stock companies, which traded collectively and were open to anyone who purchased shares.[125] In contrast, joining the Merchant Adventurers in most cases meant completing an apprenticeship that in Newcastle could last between seven and ten years.

Holding a virtual monopoly of the foreign trade in cloth for several centuries meant the Merchant Adventurers of England had a strong influence in foreign affairs and international relations.[126] Yet, as will be argued in Chapter Six, through the local branches the company also had a key role in local affairs. Following the establishment of the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers in 1480, the company solidified as an entity and by the reign of Queen Elizabeth it had an annually appointed governor assisted by twelve assignees nominated in a charter issued in 1559.[127] Both the Hostmen and the Merchant Adventurers feature prominently in the history of Newcastle during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially with respect to municipal affairs and the 'inner ring' elite that dominated the government of the town. This can be seen in Howell's history of Newcastle during the Civil War.[128] From this account we can see that the 'inner ring' remained a feature of the Newcastle corporation throughout the conflict. Following a lengthy siege the Scots seized Newcastle in

122 F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts from the Records of Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Surtees Society, vol. 93 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1895), xxxvii.

123 Charles Gross, *The Gild Merchant*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1890), 128.

124 Niels Steensgaard, 'The Companies as a Specific Institution in the History of European Expansion', in *Companies and Trade*, eds. Blussé and Gaastra, 248-249; Ogilvie, *Institutions*, 31-36; Grassby, *Business Community*, 218, 365, 404-405. O. Jocelyn Dunlop and Richard D. Denman, *English Apprenticeship & Child Labour: A History* (New York, 1912), 75 notes that in 'the second half of Elizabeth's reign there was a marked outburst of activity amongst the gilds, or as they were now often called, the companies.'

125 Ogilvie, *Institutions*, 36; Theodore K. Rabb, 'Sir Edwin Sandys and the Parliament of 1604', *The American Historical Review*, 69, 3 (1964), 662; C. G. A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*, vol. 2, *Industry, Trade and Government* (Cambridge, 1984), 191-202.

126 Lingelbach, 'Internal Organization', 19-20; Anne F. Sutton, 'The Merchant Adventurers of England: The Place of the Adventurers of York and the North in the Late Middle Ages', *Northern History*, 46, 2 (2009), 219-229.

127 Newton, 'Newcastle', 286.

128 Howell, *Puritan Revolution*; Roger Howell, *Puritans and Radicals in North England: Essays in the English Revolution* (London, 1984); Roger Howell, 'Newcastle and the Nation: the Seventeenth Century Experience', in *The Tudor and Stuart Town: a Reader in English Urban History 1530-1688*, ed. Jonathan Barry (London, 1990), 274-296.

October 1644 and royalist supporters and members of the old elite were ousted in favour of parliamentarians. However, rather than seeking to abolish the 'inner ring', these 'new men' simply wanted to become part of it. Overall there were no outward changes to the civic government and at the Restoration the corporation recommenced its former pattern.[129] Crucially, those parliamentarians who were reasonably well connected through family and trade connections remained in office, despite changes in the national government to remove opponents of the monarchy. The key point is that local rather than national affairs dominated Newcastle: with the Civil War excluded freemen found a new platform upon which they could articulate longstanding grievances as issues of national importance were utilised locally to achieve specific results.[130]

Commencing with the Restoration, Chapter Six extends the chronology of Howell's work and goes on to consider the consequences the 'inner ring' had for social relations within the town. The defence of local rights is a continuing theme throughout the period under study. Separated from the open sea by nine miles of 'ill-defined river channels' meant Newcastle was never a natural port, unlike Tynemouth, situated far more conveniently several miles east of Newcastle at the mouth of the River Tyne. Ever since the construction of the castle in 1180 had stimulated internal trade, efforts had been made by the priory at Tynemouth to turn its locality (known as Shields) into a competitor and it was only in 1529 that the dispute was settled in Newcastle's favour.[131] The statute negotiated stipulated that 'no person should ship, load or unload any goods to be sold into or from any ship at any place within the river of Tyne, between the places called Sparhawke and Hedwinstremes, but only in the town of Newcastle', effectively giving the town a monopoly. With respect to the coal trade, only Hostmen could 'sell and convey Coles from that Porte into any other port or place within or without the realme.'[132] Between 1660 and 1750 Newcastle continued in its robust defence of these cherished rights and privileges, despite internal divisions amongst the 'inner ring'.[133] Prosperity rested on safeguarding control of trade on the Tyne and the hugely profitable coal trade and Chapter Six demonstrates how MPs elected by the town tended to be much more active in local issues that might jeopardise the town's rights than national affairs, not just to appease those who elected them but to protect their own business interests.

129 Ibid., 337 and Ch. 5.
130 Ibid., 337.
131 Wade, 'Overseas Trade of Newcastle upon Tyne', 32-33.
132 Newton, 'Newcastle', 285.
133 Purdue, 'Newcastle in the Long Eighteenth Century', 274. 'The town could always unite in defending its privileges against the claims of other riparian towns.' For the corporation's defence of its control of the River Tyne see Leona J. Skelton, *Tyne After Tyne: An Environmental History of a River's Battle for Protection, 1529-2015* (Winwick, 2017), 64-70.

The chapter goes on to argue that social relations in the town were conditioned by the expectation that those in positions of power would defend the rights of the town as a whole, encouraging a more nuanced reading of the role guilds played in early modern towns. For many years historians were rather negative in their appraisal of European guilds, regarding them as monopolistic organisations that hindered rather than stimulated economic growth. From the 1980s the historiography entered a new phrase when greater attention was paid to their day-to-day workings and a more positive image emerged that stressed their contribution to economic growth, a trend that has continued over the last couple of decades.[134] Not all historians welcome this move. Ogilvie in particular remains sceptical and argues merchant guilds only benefitted rulers and members whilst having 'a malign impact on the rest of the economy'.[135] Chapter Six argues that whilst the merchant guilds were monopolistic, they did at least offer a focal point around which defence of town rights could concentrate. By seeking to defend themselves against outside competition, guilds offered some protection for Newcastle trade on the Tyne, giving the town the edge over its neighbours and potential rivals. The early modern period is generally regarded as witnessing the gradual decline of guild control with the Newcastle guilds noted for their relative longevity. Chapter Six will additionally argue that one crucial factor behind their endurance was the political function they served in enabling the merchant elite to maintain control of the corporation.

1.4 Sources

The thesis consults a range of archival and printed sources, including wills, probate inventories, personal diaries, guild records, Hearth Tax returns, local newspapers and contemporary literature. Together these sources offer qualitative and quantitative evidence about Newcastle merchants and combine to give their much needed social history.

Wills and probate inventories are two of the main sources used throughout. All documents giving the occupation of the deceased as 'merchant' have been crosschecked with merchant guild records listing members and included for analysis. These documents form part of a larger set created in the process of probate granted by the ecclesiastical courts. When complete this set can also include a bond of administration (in cases where the individual died intestate) and a probate account listing deductions from the deceased's estate.

134 Stephen R. Epstein and Maarten Prak, *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800* (Cambridge, 2010); Maarten Prak, Catharina Lis, Jan Lucassen and Hugo Soly, eds. *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation* (Aldershot, 2006); Grafe and Gelderblom, 'Rise and Fall of Merchant Guilds'; Clare Crowston, 'Women, Gender, and Guilds in Early Modern Europe: An Overview of Recent Research', *International Review of Social History*, 53, 16 (2008), 19-44.

135 Ogilvie, *Institutions*, 1-3, Ch. 1 and Ch. 2.

In England and Wales it is generally the case that wills survive in greater numbers than inventories which tend to disappear as a source after 1720. This holds true for Newcastle merchants as the 234 surviving wills date throughout the period 1660-1750, with each decade providing between seventeen and thirty documents, whereas the 126 probate inventories mostly stem from 1660-1700; only thirteen date from the eighteenth century.[136] Most of these probate documents are housed in Durham University Library, though where a testator had goods in more than one diocese within the northern province the Prerogative Court of York granted probate and surviving documents are housed in the Borthwick Institute at York University. If a Newcastle merchant owned estate in a southern province the Prerogative Court of Canterbury granted probate and these records are now in the National Archives.[137] Surviving wills and probate inventories from all three repositories are included in the dataset analysed in this thesis.

In legal terms a will is the means by which a person 'regulates the rights of others to his property or family after his death.'[138] Whilst wills hold great potential for reconstructing the material and social life of the deceased, they are biased in terms of wealth, age and gender. Wealthier social groups were more likely to leave wills while men are overrepresented as married women could only write a will with the consent of their husband. An age bias is created on account of minors being prohibited from writing wills that were customarily drawn up as death approached.[139] Chapter Two uses merchant wills to see how testators left instructions for the apprenticing of their children while Chapter Six offers a more systematic analysis into charitable donations. It has to be accepted that wills only give a partial picture of charitable giving which was cumulative rather than a one-off donation at the time of death. Informal philanthropy also escapes notice and the fact that not all bequests saw the light of day after outstanding debts had been collected should not be overlooked.[140] Nevertheless, as Chapter Six demonstrates, wills are useful for monitoring how patterns of giving changed and can be used to discover which causes merchants favoured.

136 Tom Arkell, 'Interpreting Probate Inventories', in *When Death do us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, eds. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford, 2000), 72-73. Around 12,000 inventories survive for the diocese of Durham (which includes Newcastle) relating to 1600-1720; after this date the survival rate also drops sharply. See: Linda J. Drury, 'Inventories in the Probate Records of the Diocese of Durham', *AA*, Fifth Series, 28 (2000), 17.

137 Arkell, 'Interpreting', 72-73.

138 Stephen Coppel, 'Wills and the Community: A Case Study of Tudor Grantham', in *Probate Records and the Local Community*, ed. Philip Riden (Gloucester, 1985), 72.

139 Nigel Goose and Nesta Evans, 'Wills as an Historical Source', in *When Death do us Part*, eds. Arkell, Evans and Goose, 44-47.

140 Ibid., 50-54.

Probate inventories were created in the same process as wills but are very different in content. These documents were designed as a check on the executor of the estate and consist of a list of all moveable forms of wealth with an estimated value for each item.[141] Their purpose is neatly summarised in the will of the Newcastle merchant John Kelly who asked his supervisors

> that a true & perfect Inventory be taken of my personall Estate soon after my decease thereby the better to know what my personall Estate amounts to in order that each of my said Children shall have his[,] her or their due share & part thereof according to the true intent & meaning of this my Will.[142]

Inventories can be highly informative but are not without their limitations. Above all they are socially selective. To qualify for probate there was a £5 threshold which acted as a barrier excluding many from representation—by one estimate as much as 60-80 percent of the population.[143] Inventories are also limited in the extent to which they reflect the lifecycle of the deceased. Items bequeathed or sold prior to death do not appear which means even the most detailed document only provides a snapshot of a past life that may have experienced considerably varied fortunes. Establishing the deceased's overall wealth from their inventory is also more complex than first appears. Appraisers were not required to list real estate or any debts owing by the deceased so any attempt to establish overall wealth is severely restricted.[144] Probate accounts are far more useful for establishing overall wealth as these list debts paid from the deceased's estate; unfortunately their survival rate is poor and only one has come to light for a Newcastle merchant in the period under study.[145]

Chapter Five makes extensive use of probate inventories for the discussion of material culture. To arrive at approximations of household wealth the idea of 'domestic wealth' is used. Domestic wealth is calculated by totalling all valuations of household furniture whilst omitting debts and merchandise, the idea being that the contents of a house can be used as a

141 Jeff and Nancy Cox, 'Probate 1500-1800: A System in Transition', in *When Death do us Part*, eds. Arkell, Evans and Goose, 25.

142 DUL, DPR/I/1/1722/K1/1-5.

143Chris Husbands, 'Hearths, Wealth and Occupations: An Exploration of the Hearth Tax in the Later Seventeenth Century', in *Surveying the People: The Interpretation and Use of Document Sources for the Study of Population in the Later Seventeenth Century*, eds. Kevin Schurer and Tom Arkell (Oxford, 1992), 70.

144 For contemporary advice on probate inventories see Henry Swinburne, *A Briefe Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills* (London, 1635), pt. 6, 54-58. For the problem of establishing wealth from probate inventories see: Margaret Spufford, 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', in *English Rural Society 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*, ed. David Hey (Cambridge, 1990), 139-174.

145 Surviving probate accounts feature in a database compiled as part of Cambridge University Wills Project (2006). See: *England Wills Project* [dataset], http://www.dspace.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/131688, accessed 17 April 2017.

guide to the relative wealth and social standing of the occupants. Chapter Four also makes use of probate inventories when discussing the size of merchant properties. As most appraisers list the room within which they found each item the size of the property can be calculated by totalling the number of rooms listed. Unfortunately if a room contained no goods it escapes mention, although in urban properties space was at a premium and empty rooms were probably not that common. Conceivably rooms were emptied before the inventory was compiled but this was an offence the ecclesiastical lawyer Henry Swinburne cautioned against and does not appear to have been a common problem.[146]

To deepen the discussion of merchant properties, Chapter Four uses the 1665 Hearth Tax return. Introduced in 1662, the Hearth Tax was based on the assumption that the size of a house served as an index to the wealth of the inhabitants and levied 1*s* twice a year on every hearth in England and Wales.[147] The Hearth Tax was always unpopular and with the coming of William and Mary and the Glorious Revolution in 1689 the tax was abolished. Hearth Tax returns hold great promise for reconstructing the wealth, population and social structure of seventeenth-century society. Ostensibly a fairly straightforward source, interpreting historical Hearth Tax returns can nonetheless prove tricky. The idea was that the number of hearths people had in their home approximated their wealth, and whilst a general correlation exists between the two, there are some major challenges to such an interpretation.[148] The line between exemption and liability could be fairly tight, with some paying the tax being only marginally better off than those excused.[149] Determining what it meant to live in a one-hearth household is particularly difficult as it cannot be assumed that they were inhabited by the poorer members of society. Nor can it be assumed that owners of three or four hearth properties were wealthier than those with one or two.[150] Other problems stem from changes made to the way the tax was collected by different administrations which brought much confusion. Return lists sometimes appear to be incomplete or to contain inaccuracies, especially when it comes to exemptions. Some hearth totals may disguise evasion while listed names do not always represent occupiers of separate houses.[151] Acknowledging the limitations of the source, Chapter Four will use the Hearth Tax to assess merchant properties

146 Swinburne, *Briefe Treatise*, Part 6, 55; Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer*, 115.
147 Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2009), 116.
148 Husbands, 'Hearths, Wealth and Occupations', 65-77.
149 Wrightson, *English Society*, 156.
150 David Hey, introduction to *Houses and the Hearth Tax: the Later Stuart House and Society*, eds. P. S. Barnwell and Malcolm Airs, CBA Research Report 150 Council for British Archaeology (York, 2006), 4.
151 Tom Arkell, 'Printed Instructions for Administering the Hearth Tax', in *Surveying the People*, eds. Schurer and Arkell, 38-64.

against the provision of housing in Newcastle and determine residential patterns and show how wealthy merchants tended to congregate in certain areas.

To gain a more personal take on life as a Newcastle merchant, Chapter Two examines the diary of Ralph Jackson (1736-1790).[152] Ralph came from a reasonably prosperous family in Richmond, located around fifty miles to the south of Newcastle in North Yorkshire. He commenced his apprenticeship with the Newcastle Hostman William Jefferson in 1749 when he was thirteen years old and for the next seven years lived with his master while he learned the skills of a coal trader. Upon instruction from his father he began to keep a diary and aside from a brief period in 1754-5 continued to do so until his death in 1790.[153] Surprisingly little use has been made of the diary which offers an unrivalled insight into the life of a merchant apprentice.[154]

When it comes to discussing the inner working of the merchant guilds, the thesis makes use of the court records of the Merchant Adventurers. These detail the day-to-day operation of the company and illustrate how it tried to encourage a sense of collectiveness amongst members. It is also from these records that Dendy compiled his list of apprentices which provides the data on enrolments analysed in Chapter Three.[155] Prior to the 1562 Statute of Artificers (5 Eliz. 1 c.4) the recording of admissions is rather patchy, but one consequence of this statute, which put in place a number of regulations for apprenticeship, is that entrants are listed much more systematically, meaning a reasonably accurate record of apprentice numbers and their social origins can be established for the period under study. It should be noted that apprenticeships were not also recorded at the civic level.

Combining these sources together in a single study offers a unique insight into the Newcastle merchant community and provides a much needed social history of its role in the expansion of the town. Over the course of the study it will become apparent that the century after the Restoration is pivotal for explaining how the modern city of Newcastle emerged from its medieval roots.

152 TA, Diaries of Ralph Jackson, U/WJ/1-6.

153 Clifford E. Thornton, *Bound for the Tyne: Extracts From the Diary of Ralph Jackson Apprentice Hostman of Newcastle upon Tyne 1749-1756* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2000), 3.

154 Two historians that treat the diary to more thorough inspections are Wright, *Life on the Tyne*, Ch.7; Barbara Crosbie, 'The Rising Generations: A Northern Perspective on Age Relations and the Contours of Cultural Change, England c.1740-1785, Durham University PhD thesis (2011), Ch. 4.

155 F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts from the Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Surtees Society vol. 101 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1899).

Chapter Two

Becoming a Merchant: Apprenticeship and the Merchant Community

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how people became part of the merchant community in Newcastle through apprenticeship. It argues that besides the training provided, apprenticeship performed a valuable social function in helping youths assimilate into urban life. Learning the skills of a merchant was about engaging with their culture and internalising the values of the guild, which, as will be seen in the second half of the chapter, sought to enforce behavioural norms amongst their apprentices. Before this the chapter begins by suggesting that kinship networks and the bonds that held them together were highly significant when it came to finding a master. Following on, it will be claimed that 'relationships of mutuality and obligation' helped integrate the apprentice into his master's household and the Company of Merchant Adventurers and that the apprentice's relationship with both helped foster his merchant identity.[156] Assimilation into the merchant community was not a smooth process; it was characterised by conflict and 'competing discourses' and these points of friction further inform us about social relations.[157] Community is best seen as a product of a series of 'mediated relationships' and by understanding this process we get closest to understanding the negotiated nature of Newcastle's merchant community.[158]

Apprenticeship was one of the most important methods of acquiring occupational training in pre-modern Europe.[159] In England the first mention to apprenticeship occurs in the thirteenth century in reference to a voluntary local custom or private arrangement largely left to the discretion of the individuals involved.[160] Over the centuries various formalities solidified into the training process that was codified in the 1562 Statute of Artificers, an act

156 Keith Wrightson, 'Mutualities and Obligations: Changing Social Relationships in Early Modern England' *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 139 (2006), 157-194.

157 Phil Withington and Alexandra Shepard, 'Introduction: Communities in Early Modern England', in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, eds. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester, 2000), 6.

158 Ibid.

159 Patrick Wallis, 'Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern Europe', *The Journal of Economic History*, 68, 3 (2008), 832.

160 Olive Jocelyn Dunlop and Richard D. Denman, *English Apprenticeship & Child Labour: A History* (New York, 1912), 31.

embodying a wide range of proposals designed to regulate the national labour market.[161] Measures were put in place to set wage rates at the local level and machinery was established to control conditions of employment for workers and apprentices.[162] One of the most important consequences the act had for apprenticeship was the fixing of the period of service at seven years; thereafter the seven-year apprenticeship became the standard route into various skilled manufacturing, service and mercantile occupations.[163]

Apprenticeship rested on an agreement involving the child, the parent who put forward the up-front payment known as the 'apprentice premium', and the master.[164] Although apprenticeship was open to both genders, in most cases the child in question was male. Daughters were occasionally apprenticed by middling households but this was not commonplace and those training to be merchants in Newcastle were invariably male.[165] Pledges were made on each side: the master received the premium in return for providing accommodation, food and occupational training for the apprentice who vowed to keep his business secrets, avoid alehouses, not commit fornication and generally be honest and obedient. The expectation was that the apprentice would live with his master during his period of service, meaning masters in effect served as surrogate parents. In this role the master expected due respect from his apprentices and the doctrine of 'reasonable chastisement' permitted him to enforce his authority if needed, much as he did with his own children. There was no shortage of domestic guidebooks outlining the patriarchal nature of the relationship.[166] In a typical example, William Vaughan said apprentices should aim to please their masters 'in all things', a sentiment echoed by many others.[167]

For most youths, moving away to start an apprenticeship would have been the first experience of living outside the family home, something that cannot have been easy for those migrating to distant towns. Masters therefore had an important role overseeing this assimilation, demonstrating the vital social function apprenticeship had in helping youths settle into their new lives and supervising them through their adolescence. Writing in 1673,

161 Donald Woodward, 'The Background to the Statute of Artificers: The Genesis of Labour Policy, 1558-63', *EHR*, New Series, 33, 1 (1980), 32.

162 Ibid; C. G. A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*, vol. 2, *Industry, Trade and Government* (Cambridge, 1984), 230-231.

163 5 Elizabeth Ch. 4 (1562-3); the seven-year period of terms was often exceeded. See: Wallis, 'Apprenticeship', 832, 854; Joan Lane, *Apprenticeship in England, 1600-1914* (London, 1996), 16.

164 Christopher W. Brooks, *Law, Politics and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), 376.

165 Margaret R Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996), 190 which shows that out of 11,555 apprentice indentures made in the first half of the eighteenth century in Surrey, Sussex, Bedfordshire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire, just 4.9 percent were made on behalf of females.

166 Brooks, *Law*, 376.

167 William Vaughan, *The Golden Grove, Moralized in Three Books* (London, 1600), Book 2, Ch. 17; Steven R. Smith, 'The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents', *P&P*, 61 (1973), 151-153.

Francis Kirkman acknowledged this aspect of apprenticeship when he explained how 'the age of an Apprentice is the onely time of instilling good or bad into him'; this was 'the time of his making or marring, and what is well grounded in him and he learns then, he will never forget.'[168] Work, training, socialisation, family life and political eligibility were mutually integrated, and apprenticeship was as much a matter of 'moral, familial, social and political control' as it was a means of supervising the market and its labour force.[169] For many, apprenticeship involved migrating from a rural home to an urban setting and in such cases the assimilation into urban culture and society added another dimension to training.[170] Living in the household of his master, as was customary, the apprentice also learnt the domestic side of life and what it meant to be an urban citizen.[171] If a change in household status were involved, this domestic routine might amount to a whole new way of life, one the apprentice might assume once he acquired his own household. Social mobility was, after all, the intended corollary of apprenticeship.

Aside from providing the individual with the skills of his chosen occupation, apprenticeship also qualified him to claim freedom of the town. One could become a freeman by patrimony or purchase, but most commonly the status was gained following apprenticeship.[172] Being a freeman signified access to the economic resources of the town, giving the right to trade under its privileges and immunities.[173] Freeman also had the further benefit of citizenship which was a crucial component of urban identity that allowed participation in corporate communities.[174] Gaining the right to participate politically in town affairs was a key stage in the life cycle that signified the years of adolescence spent as an

168 Francis, Kirkman, *The Unlucky Citizen: Experimentally Described in the Various Misfortunes of an Unlucky Londoner* (London, 1673), 146-147.

169 K. D. M. Snell, 'The Apprenticeship System in British History: the Fragmentation of a Cultural Institution', *History of Education*, 25, 4 (1996), 305-306.

170 Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge, 1989), 294; Wallis, 'Apprenticeship', 851; Adrian Green, 'Consumption and Material Culture', in *A Social History of England, 1500-1750*, ed. Keith Wrightson (Cambridge, 2017), 242-266; Lane, *Apprenticeship*, 2.

171 Rebecca Frances King, 'Aspects of Sociability in the North East of England 1600-1750', Durham University PhD thesis (2001), 24; Richard Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1995), 365; John Walter, 'Faces in the Crowd: Gender and Age in the Early Modern English Crowd', in *The Family in Early Modern England*, eds. Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (Cambridge, 2007), 108; Green, 'Consumption'.

172 Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth: Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005), 10.

173 David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (London, 1991), 122. Being non-free usually excluded the individual from working in the town or its suburbs. See W. J. Sheils, 'The Company of Tailors and Drapers, 1551-1662', in *The Merchant Taylors of York: a History of the Craft Company from the Fourteenth Century to Twentieth Century*, eds. R. B. Dobson and D. M. Smith, Borthwick Texts and Studies, 33 (York, 2006), 61. In sixteenth-century London, apprenticeship was the means by which seven of every eight men became freemen of the city or members of one of its companies. See Rappaport, *Worlds*, 291-292 and Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, 10.

174 Phil Withington, 'Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship, and State Formation in Early Modern England', *The American Historical Review*, 112, 4 (2007), 1017, 1033.

apprentice were over, replaced by the maturity and responsibilities of adulthood.[175] Marriage was forbidden whilst serving an apprenticeship which meant becoming a householder, another stepping stone to attaining adulthood, had to wait until one's time was served.

2.2 The road to apprenticeship

For most youths apprenticeship began when they were between fourteen and eighteen years old.[176] Richard Rawling, a Newcastle merchant, specified in 1660 that his son Samuel was to be apprenticed 'at the age of fifteene yeares' which can be regard as fairly typical.[177] When children approached this age the choice had to be made with regards to a suitable trade. How much say the child had is often unclear. Dunlop and Denman claim the choice 'lay with the lad and his parents,' a view echoed by Ben-Amos who argues parents often initiated a career but sought the approval of the child who was free to make up his own mind.[178] Guidebooks advising on the subject imply a degree of negotiation was expected. For example, in *The Parent's and Guardian's Directory, and the Youth's Guide, in the Choice of a Profession* (1761) the author hoped the book would be useful for his 'young readers', as indicated in the title.[179] Autobiographical evidence also suggests children were far from passive during negotiations.[180] That some apprentices were given a one or two week trial period in a number of positions before committing themselves to a career also shows a degree of choice was involved in certain cases.[181]

Based on an analysis of the 234 Newcastle merchant wills that exist for the period 1660-1750, parental input varied between households.[182] Some merchants gave a clear indication of preference. Robert Foster's 'will and minde' was, for example, that his son John 'shall be put out and bound apprentice to some honest Seafaireing Master to Learne the

175 Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), 27.

176 Rappaport, *Worlds*, 295-297; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London, 1994), 226; Lane, *Apprenticeship*, 13-16.

177 DUL, DPR/I/1/1660/R2/1.

178 Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*, 157; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Service and the Coming of Age of Young Men in Seventeenth-Century England', *Continuity and Change*, 3, 1 (1988), 49-51. For an example of input from the child, see Charles Jackson, ed. *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Surtees Society, vol. 65 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1877), 201. For examples of parents determining their child's apprenticeship see J. D. Marshall, ed. *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster, 1665-1752* (Manchester, 1967), 73 and Kirkman, *Unlucky Citizen*, 35.

179 Joseph Collyer, *The Parent's and Guardian's Directory, and the Youth's Guide, in the Choice of a Profession or Trade* (London, 1761), v.

180 Ralph Houlbrooke, ed. *English Family Life, 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford, 1988), 171-173, 176-178, 180-183,189-191.

181 Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London, 2006), 19.

182 For statistics relating to the survival of wills across the period see Chapter Six, Table 6.3.

Mistery or Occupation of a Marriner'.[183] More commonly merchants set aside specific sums of money but expressed no clear instruction regarding the type of trade their children were to follow. Richard Rawling left £200, a considerable sum in 1660, to bind his son Robert without further comment.[184] Speaking of his children, Alderman Nicholas Fenwick ordered that 'when the time comes that it is fit to put any of them into the world as binding them to Trades or the like then I doe give leave to break into the said principal sums of money given to my said young sons', but did not stipulate any particular trade.[185] George Iley left money to apprentice his son 'to a trade or profession' without insisting he follow in his footsteps as a Hostman.[186] John Kelly left £100 for 'putting out' his son John 'to be an Apprentice' and similarly left no further instructions; neither did George Henderson or Thomas Crome, both of whom set aside money to apprentice their sons.[187]

Of course, prior to a will being drawn up arrangements might already have been made with respect to the child's future occupation. But the above examples do not suggest this was generally the case. Furthermore, other examples clearly show parents left room for negotiation. William Proctor is a case in point. He made provisions for his two sons 'towards binding them or either of them apprentices' and added that the money could also be used for 'putting them or either of them to or fitting them for callings and imployments or otherwise towards their support and business.[188] William Kent had five daughters and one son and in his will desired that his wife allow them a 'Competent sum of money' when the time came 'as an addition to their said fortunes, in order the better to enable them to follow Business for themselves'.[189] John Carr was slightly more specific, but only with regards to the type of households his children entered. He left 'bindeing money' for his son Nathaniel without expressing any preference of trade, though when speaking of his six children as a collective, stressed that 'care may be taken for theire dispose into sober familyes where they may have the advantage of Pious examples for their imitation', clearly appreciating the important social function of apprenticeship.[190]

As all of these examples are drawn from wills made by the child's father, they do not tell us how much input mothers had when it came to deciding upon careers for their children. That they did have an important role seems likely as many husbands left their wives money to

183 DUL, DPR/I/1/1708/F8/1.
184 DUL, DPR/I/1660/R2/1.
185 DUL, DPR/I/1/1725/F3/1.
186 DUL, DPR/I/1/1740/I1/1.
187 DUL, DPR/I/1/1722/K1/1-5; DUL, DPR/I/1/1710/H6/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1664/C13/1.
188 DUL, DPR/I/1/1719/P8/1.
189 DUL, DPR/I/1/1742/K3/1.
190 DUL, DPR/I/1/1682/C3/1-2.

invest in the education of their children as they saw fit. Charles Atkinson had 'full trust and Confidence' in his 'most Dear Wife' when it came to their children, assured that her 'prudent distribution' would serve their best interests.[191] John Procter was to receive £1,000 from his father's estate when he came of age, but it was up to his mother, whether she 'adjudge it for [his] advantage' or not, if he was to receive £300 beforehand 'to be imployed in trade.'[192] Hannah Cookson was bequeathed £500 by her husband to be divided amongst her children as she saw fit while Sarah Dawson was left in charge of the tuition of her children, her husband 'not Doubting' that she would prove to be the 'best of Mothers'.[193] From the evidence it seems likely that the selection of an apprentice's trade involved mother, father and child, though on occasions the decision was made on behalf of the latter.

Deciding upon the trade was the first step. Next a suitable master had to be found, which presented its own problems. The repercussions of selecting an unsuitable master were far reaching. '[H]ere the grossest errors are frequently committed', wrote Joseph Collyer; 'it is too often seen, that for want of sufficient care in this particular, the unhappy youth is inevitably ruined.'[194] Doubtless the author of *The Unlucky Citizen* agreed. His unhappy apprenticeship led him to publish an account of his miserable experience so parents might exercise caution 'in the choice of a good Master'.[195] The more respected masters commanded the highest apprentice premiums and for parents who could afford it this offered some guarantee.[196] Indeed, as the merchant Josiah Childs commented, rather than the merchant's company determining the apprentice premium, it was the 'condition [of] the Master, as to his more or less reputed skill in his Calling, Thriving or going backward, greater or lesser Trade, well or ill Government of himself and Family'.[197] Prestigious and profitable trades similarly commanded higher entrance fees. In the 1760s Collyer gave some examples, presumably in London, and these ranged from £5-20 to be apprenticed to a barber, £20-100 to an apothecary and £100-400 to a mercer. Merchants could ask between £100 and £500.[198] High status companies such as the Merchant Adventurers had the largest premiums and as a consequence many of their apprentices were sons of wealthy businessmen and from well-to-do families.[199]

191 DUL, DPR/I/1/1733/A11/1-2.
192 DUL, DPR/I/1/1719/P8/1.
193 DUL, DPR/I/1/1743/C10/1; BI, YDA11, Registered Copies of Wills, 93, f. 2-2^{v}.
194 Collyer, *Parent's and Guardian's Directory*, vi.
195 Kirkman, *Unlucky Citizen*, 147.
196 Lane, *Apprenticeship*, 19-27.
197 Josiah Child, *A Discourse of Trade* (London, 1694), 108-109.
198 Collyer, *Parent's and Guardian's Directory*, 47, 60, 191-192.
199 Clay, *Economic Expansion*, vol. 2, 201; Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social Mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800', in *The Middling sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke, 1994), 60.

Only a few Newcastle merchant wills give the amount set aside for apprentice premiums. We have seen that in 1721 William Harrison ordered that the 'Apprentice Fees' for each of his sons and his daughter should 'exceed not the sum of £50'.[200] To this can be added William Proctor's two sons who were left £100 each, as were the sons of John Carr.[201] In 1660 each of Richard Rawling's two sons had £200 set aside for their apprenticeship premiums. William Harrison's children would have been unlikely to train with the best masters with a budget of £50 but the others could expect entry into the more prestigious trades under the tuition of a well-respected merchant.

With the career decided upon and the premium in place, a master had to be found. Advertisements placed in newspapers offered some help, particularly for those seeking openings in a distant town, especially London. During the seventeenth century 689 youths migrated from the northeast to be apprenticed in London, of whom around 10 percent came from Newcastle.[202] Seeking out masters was made easier for these families with publications such as John Houghton's monthly *Collection for Improvement of Agriculture and Trade* which frequently ran 'apprentice wanted' advertisements. Issued weekly between 1692 and 1703, such advertisements were a staple feature, with Houghton assuring his readers that 'Many Masters want Apprentices, and many Youths want Masters. If they apply themselves to me, I'll strive to help them.'[203] Provincial newspapers offered a comparable service, albeit on a smaller scale. In 1712 an advert ran in the *Newcastle Courant* for 'Anyone who is desirous to put his Son Apprentice, for the Term of Seven Years, to a very good Handycraft Trade', informing them that they 'may Enquire of the Printer of this Courant, who can inform them of the Trade and Person.'[204] In another example from 1724, a 'Gentleman in Newcastle' had on offer a seven-year apprenticeship in business and accountancy for a boy 'about 16 Years of Age' who was able to 'write a good Hand … and understand common Arithmertick', an opening that promised the successful candidate 'the Freedom of the Corporation' and a 'good Trade' once training was completed.[205] A copy of *The Newcastle Gazette* from 1748 contains a similar 'Wanted' advertisement for 'A Lad of about sixteen Years of Age, as an Apprentice to a Fuller and Dyer in Newcastle upon Tyne'.[206] Notable as these examples are,

200 DUL, DPR/I/1/1721/H8/1.
201 DUL, DPR/I/1/1719/P8/I; DUL, DPR/I/1/1682/C3/1-2.
202 Jacob F. Field, 'Apprenticeship Migration to London from the North-East of England in the Seventeenth Century', *The London Journal*, 35, 1 (2010), 5 Table 3.
203 Anita McConnell, 'Houghton, John (1645-1705)' *ODNB*; John Houghton, *Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, issue 84, 9 March (London, 1694).
204 *NC* no. 145 June 30 - July 2, 1712. The advert appeared in subsequent issues. See, for example, *NC* no. 146 July 2-5 1712; *NC* no. 148 July 7-9, 1712; *NC* no. 149 July 9-12, 1712.
205 *NC* no. 205 May 23, 1724.
206 *The Newcastle Gazette* no. 200 Apr. 13, 1748.

given the small number of advertisements it seems unlikely that local newspapers made a large contribution to recruiting apprentices in Newcastle. The readership did of course extend further than the town of issue and London newspapers soon made their way from the coffeehouses to the country, while those issued in the provinces also had an extensive distribution network.[207] But this circulation of information only really developed after 1700; prior to this there were no printed newspapers in the provinces and even London had few titles circulating nationally.[208] Finding a suitable master evidently relied on more than print culture alone.

From other evidence it would appear that most parents drew on a mixture of business contacts, friends and family when it came to finding a master for their children.[209] Ben-Amos argues that parental connections were necessary for sourcing placements as well as providing some much needed information on the character of potential masters. Kin, friends, neighbours and occupational ties 'were the first link between a young man and his future master.'[210] Rappaport likewise proposes that for those migrating to London networks of friends and relatives were often an important means of procuring apprenticeships.[211] Yet whilst one's family was the first port of call when it came to finding a master, being apprenticed to an actual family member was not particularly common. Leunig et al. have shown that in the period 1600-1749 the majority of London's migrant apprentices had no observable family link with their master.[212] This was replicated in provincial urban centres where Ben-Amos shows a minority of urban apprentices had the same surname as their master, typically in the order of 2-5 percent in towns such as Bristol, Norwich and Southampton.[213] Grassby similarly claims that children of businessmen were only occasionally apprenticed to kin, showing that between 1580 and 1740 the proportion rose

207 Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl, *Perceptions of Retailing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2007), 20.
208 Ibid., 151-152.
209 Ben-Amos, 'Service and the Coming of Age'; Spencer Dimmock, 'The Origins of Welsh Apprentices in Sixteenth-Century Bristol', *The Welsh History Review*, 24, 4 (2009), 134, 138; Richard Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, Family, and Business in the English-Speaking World, 1580-1740* (Cambridge, 2001), 277-282.
210 Ben-Amos, 'Service and the Coming of Age', 48; Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 167.
211 Rappaport, *Worlds*, 80.
212 Tim Leunig, Chris Minnis and Patrick Wallis. 'Networks in the Premodern Economy: the Market for London Apprenticeships, 1600-1749', *The Journal of Economic History*, 71, 2 (2011), 435-437 and *passim*. Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, 1989), 90-91 also concludes that 'most apprentices seem to have found masters with whom neither they nor their parents had any prior relationship of any sort.' Cf. Rappaport, *Worlds*, 80 which states that 15 percent of 266 entrants and of 460 masters 'engaged at least one apprentice during their lives with the same surname.'
213 Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 167, *n*.65. See also Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (London, 1984), 46, which uses a sample of 500 apprentices enrolled in Norwich during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century to illustrate the same point: less than 4 percent of apprentices had a master who bore the same name.

from 2 percent to 6 percent; those bound to their fathers were even less common, rising from 1 percent to 4.6 percent across the same period.[214]

In Newcastle, of the 1,754 apprentices enrolled to the Merchant Adventurers between 1600 and 1749, only 4 percent shared a surname with their master, confirming how uncommon it was for sons to be apprenticed to family members.[215] Kinship networks and family patronage certainly mattered though. For example, in 1696 the Newcastle gentleman Henry Milbourne apprenticed his son Henry to his brother-in-law William Aubone, a Merchant Adventurer and presumably the same William Aubone Henry's wife Margaret appointed supervisor of her will.[216] A further example can be seen with Ralph Jackson who was apprenticed to the Newcastle Hostman William Jefferson in 1749.[217] Although Ralph does not mention in his diary how Jefferson came to be his master, a prior link between the families seems likely as when he was formally bound in 1749 another Jefferson was present whom Ralph referred to as 'Cousin Jefferson'.[218] The example of George Colpitts shows how other apprenticeships were set up through the father's social networks. George was apprenticed to the Newcastle merchant Ralph Sowerby in 1731 and in the will of Joseph Colpitts, an uncle of George and a Newcastle Hostman, Ralph appears again, this time as one of three individuals bequeathed £20 with the intention that it be paid to the treasurer of the local charity school. Ralph was also one of the executors appointed by Joseph.[219] How familiar George was with Ralph is open to question, but a link through business seems likely, as George's father Lionel was also a Newcastle merchant.

The business community supposedly placed a high value on recruiting family members to their ranks in order to protect their interests from outsiders. As Devine has commented with reference to Scotland's merchant community in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries,

> [t]his was an era of developing but still unreliable communications, high risks and unsophisticated commercial law. The business world was thus a tight nexus in which a

214 Grassby, *Kinship*, 277-278.

215 Calculated from the dataset used in Chapter Three.

216 DUL, DPR/I/1/1698/M5/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1698/M6/1-2. In both instances he is given the appellation 'esquire' which suggests this was William Aubone esquire who was a Merchant Adventurer and served as an alderman in Newcastle and town mayor in 1684. See DUL, DPR/I/1/1702/A8/1-2; Henry Bourne, *The History of Newcastle upon Tyne* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1736), 96, 243.

217 F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts From the Records of the Company of Hostmen of Newcastle upon Tyne*, Surtees Society, vol. 105 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1901), 277, 294. Jefferson was apprenticed in July 1722 and went on to be admitted to the company seven years later.

218 TA, U/WJ/A, f.3. Dated Nov. 17, 1749. Furthermore, in his enrolment record Jefferson's father is listed as a gentleman from Croft in Yorkshire, which is located several miles north of Richmond, home of the Jacksons. See: Dendy, *Records of the Company of Hostmen*, 277, 294. For Ralph's enrolment to Jefferson see 296.

219 DUL, DPR/I/1/1729/C14/1.

> merchant's reputation and that of his family was his most precious asset: to deal with kin and trusted acquaintances was not simply understandable but justifiable. Nepotism had a basic commercial rationale.[220]

Given that only a small proportion of children were apprenticed to family members, particularly their fathers, this requires an explanation.[221] Part of the answer lies in the custom of patrimony, which allowed the eldest son of a guild member to be admitted to the same organisation without the need to serve an apprenticeship.[222] The number of youths admitted to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers between 1600 and 1749 is displayed in Table 3.1, Chapter Three. This shows that whilst the number admitted by patrimony never exceeded those formally apprenticed to a company member, the proportion is significant. Whist we cannot assume that all entrants via patrimony went on to work in the family business, some certainly would have.

Many apprenticed outside the family would also have returned to work in the family business after serving their time, or when their father died and left his business interests to them, something Newcastle merchant wills show was commonplace.

According to Grassby between 1580 and 1740 roughly half of businessmen were recruited from outside the family.[223] It was essential that these new recruits felt part of the business community and he explains that these 'outsiders who infiltrated family businesses were treated as family members' and 'integrated into the family structure'.[224] The next section will argue that this underlines the important social function of apprenticeship, as it was this that brought 'outsiders' into the merchant household and fostered these crucial bonds.

2.3 Assimilation into the merchant community

The apprentice's assimilation into the merchant community began with the signing of his indenture. Promises were made on both sides: the master was to teach the skills of the trade and the apprentice was to preserve his secrets and obey his commandments.[225] When Ralph Jackson signed his indenture at the start of his apprenticeship with a Newcastle merchant, six

220 T. M. Devine, 'The Merchant Class of the Larger Scottish Towns in the Later Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', in T. M. Devine, *Exploring the Scottish Past: Themes in the History of Scottish Society* (East Lothian, 1995), 25.
221 Grassby, *Business Community*, 89-91, 330-331; Grassby, *Kinship*, 309-311.
222 Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*, 160.
223 Grassby, *Kinship*, 309.
224 Ibid., 310.
225 Brooks, 'Apprenticeship', 53.

people were present, including his master, father and cousin.[226] Ralph was only thirteen at the time and the formality of signing his indenture in the presence of several adults, only some of whom he was likely to have known, must have pressed home the fact he was taking the first step towards entering their world. With the apprenticeship formally recognised, the apprentice took up residence in the household of his master where he would live for the duration of his term as part of the family.[227] Living in his master's household offered the apprentice the critical socialisation into the mercantile way of life, teaching him what it meant to live as part of the merchant community and what it meant to be the head of a household.[228]

Tadmor's idea of the 'household-family' offers one way to understand how apprentices became part of their new household. Essentially the household-family had boundaries not of blood and marriage but authority and household management, meaning whoever lived in the household under the authority of the head became part of the 'family'. In legal terms, the master acted as parent to the apprentice for the duration of his service.[229] As explained by Collyer in 1761, 'A boy, on his being put apprentice, ought to consider that his parents, or his friends, have for his advantage devolved their authority on his master … to whom he is under the highest obligations'.[230] With parental authority transferred to the master, under the doctrine of 'reasonable chastisement' he was permitted to enforce his discipline on the apprentices living in his household.[231] Youths were required to swear an oath promising good behaviour and their commitment to live an upstanding life devoid of alehouses, fornication and general debauchery. With wages rare, this was probably easier done than said, though parents did occasionally subsidise living expenses.[232] Despite the clear hierarchical household structure and the apprentice's conventional promise of obedience, the process of assimilation was often fraught with conflict. Contemporaries largely expected this to be the case. Youth was seen as a period of difficult transition and whilst the young were expected to absorb the values of the adult world, it was understood that they might challenge

226 TA, U/WJ/A, f.3. Dated Nov. 17, 1749.
227 Occasionally apprentice merchants would spend time overseas as part of their training.
228 Rappaport, *Worlds*, 294.
229 Naomi Tadmor, *Family & Friends in Eighteenth Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), Ch.1; Lane, *Apprenticeship*, 2-3.
230 Collyer, *Parent's and Guardian's Directory*, 303.
231 Brooks, *Law*, 376.
232 Brooks, 'Apprenticeship', 53; Wallis, 'Apprenticeship and Training', 835. For Adam Smith it was also the case that during the apprenticeship the 'whole labour of the apprentice' belonged to his master. See Adam Smith *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, eds. R. H. Campbell, A. S. Skinner and W. B. Todd, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1976), 119. See also DUL, DPR/I/1/1721/H8/1 which shows the Newcastle Hostman William Harrison stipulating in his will that his estate was to pay 'such respective sums for Maintaining them [his children] in Clothes during their Apprenticeshipps'.

social norms in the process.[233] Guidance manuals stressed the subordinate position of apprentices and went to great lengths to outline their expected behaviour, which was usually along the lines of showing '*Respect, Fidelity,* and *Obedience*' to the master and exercising godliness at all times.[234] Nevertheless, a breakdown in relations could quickly develop and the wayward apprentice was a staple feature of contemporary literature. Hogarth's 1747 *Industrious* and *Idle Apprentice* print sequences were amusing for some; for others they served as 'wall-poster morality'—ideals and warnings rooted in reality.[235]

Failure in master-apprentice relations could come about through the latter's reluctance to respects the bounds of authority. Many apprentices found their lowly status difficult to accept when it came to the menial tasks they were expected to perform. Francis Kirkman was particularly dismayed when 'no sooner bound' was informed that he was expected to do 'Petty services.' 'I was to make clean the Shooes, carry out the Ashes and Dust sweep the Shop, cleanse the Sink (and a long and nasty one it was) draw the Beer, [and] at washing times to fetch up Coals and Kettles', he fumed.[236] Cruel masters also made for a miserable life and forced many apprentices to flee the household. The 'Harshness', 'unreasonable Severity' and 'ill Designs and Practices' of London masters was highlighted by Stephen Edwards in 1687, something he described as 'so common and notorious' that 'no part of the Nation' was without 'many examples of unhappy young men.'[237] Court records of the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers show some apprentices suffered similar mistreatment. In 1699 the apprentice James Nesfield was brought before the court accused of being 'very undutyfull' in his service to William Johnson, but in his defence explained how Johnson 'had given him undue correction, by beateing him with his hands, and kickeing him with his feete, which rendered him uncapeable of doeing that service he ought.' On one occasion he 'violently beate him, and endeaverd to thrust him headlong downe staires.'[238] Timothy Robson was similarly mistreated by his master. Such was his 'unreasonable and violent beating … that hee was altogether disabled … and forced to goe home to his Fathers where he doth still continue in a very badd condition.'[239]

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233 Walter, 'Faces in the Crowd', 105.

234 John Gother, *Instructions for Apprentices and Servants* (London, 1699), 3-4, 14-15, 21; Richard Burton, *The Apprentices Companion* (London, 1693), 20-23; William Smythies, *Advice to Apprentices, and Other Young Persons* (London, 1687), 3; Thomas Gouge, *The Young Man's Guide* (London, 1670).

235 Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1990), 244.

236 Kirkman, *Unlucky Citizen*, 35-37.

237 Edward Stephens, *Relief of Apprentices Wronged by their Masters* (London, 1687), 1.

238 T&WA, GU MA/2/1, f. 250; GU MA 2/1 f. 255. Johnson was fined £100 and ordered to pay James his wages. James was given three months to find a new master.

239 T&WA, GU MA/2/1, f. 201.

That James and Timothy spoke out against their ill treatment offers important evidence that the relationships they had with their masters carried mutual expectations. Quarter session records examined by Rushton confirm that it was common for apprentices to initiate actions against their masters in the northeast. In Newcastle just three out of eighty-eight cases brought before the court between 1600 and 1800 were initiated by masters.[240] Further evidence that the relationship between master and apprentice held mutual expectations can be seen in the reasons behind the actions. For all cases from Durham and Newcastle, around a quarter stemmed from apprentices claiming abuse by their master, but a third complained about lack of instruction. Apprentices knew their rights and despite their subordinate position were quite capable of acting for their own interests.[241] Negotiation can be seen here as a crucial element in the relationship between apprentice and master that served to continually redefine the domestic order within the household.[242] Examples of this negotiation can be found in the diary of Ralph Jackson. On one occasion Ralph's master was 'angry' at him for not finishing an account and on another he complained that Ralph 'wou'd not let him alone.' Here Ralph protested. 'I told my Master it was a false accusation', he wrote, 'w^{ch} he seems to take perticular Notice on.'[243] Evidence of a more serious incident describes how Ralph went downstairs one morning to find his master 'beating the dog for Tearing the Magazene'. Ralph received 'two or three slaps for lyeing it there' from his master, though he asked Ralph for his 'pardon after he had done it'.[244] These fleeting incidents demonstrate the much wider point that whilst patriarchal authority was a strong presence in the early modern household, it was not unchallenged. Rather than a closed sphere of 'rigidly defined roles', for both master and apprentice, the merchant household was a sphere of mutuality and obligation.[245]

Whether this was the case for non-merchant apprentices is an important question to ask. Despite apprenticeship denoting a subordinate position within the household, part of a merchant apprentice's status was derived from his connection to the business concerns of his master. According to Kermode this raised the profile of apprentice merchants who enjoyed a different status within the household, closer to their master who held them in 'close

240 Peter Rushton, 'The Matter in Variance: Adolescents and Domestic Conflict in the Pre-Industrial Economy of Northeast England, 1600-1800', *Journal of Social History*, 25, 1 (1991), 92.
241 Ibid., 94-95.
242 Wrightson 'Mutualities', 171-173.
243 TA, U/WJ/C, f. 60. Dated Sep. 14, 1751; TA, U/WJ/E, f. 144. Dated May 10, 1756.
244 TA, U/WJ/C, f. 89. Dated Feb. 14, 1752.
245 Wrightson, 'Mutualities', 172.

confidence and respect.'[246] This supports the argument made at the outset that the training function of merchant apprenticeship was entwined with the social function. Learning to be a merchant required the apprentice to be part of his master's social network, but to do so he had to gain trust and respect. Evidence from wills shows that some merchants certainly deposed trust in their apprentices and supports the hypothesis that this may have raised their profile within the household. Some merchants formally recognised trust in their wills by appointing apprentices to serve as witnesses.[247] In the case of Thomas Wasse, he served as a witness along with a fellow merchant (a cousin of his master) and a member of the affluent Ellison merchant family, described as a notary public. Thomas received 20s as a cash bequest from his master but he also earned social recognition by performing this duty alongside established merchants; he was acting as part of the merchant community.[248] William Carr left each of his two apprentices £10, though interestingly only Richard Tempest acted as witness to his will, which may well point to the existence of an apprentice hierarchy. When the will was made in 1660 Richard was three years into his apprenticeship, a year longer than fellow apprentice William Stephenson. Experience could have been a factor in Carr's decision to appoint Richard rather than William as a witness, though their different social backgrounds might also have come into play.[249] William Stephenson was described as the son of a Penrith gentleman while Richard Tempest belonged to a family that had been seated in the counties of York and Durham for centuries, his father a knight.[250] Worth, age and social status were all taken into account when it came to assessing how much weight to give to the evidence of witnesses in church courts and it is possible that Richard's elevated social status gave him the edge over William.[251] When Richard acted as a witness he did so alongside Sir William Blackett, a member of Newcastle's leading merchant family, which doubtless enhanced the sense of trust and honour placed in him by his master. That such bonds fostered in this way not only mattered but endured, is clear from Richard's nuncupative will. Asked how he wished to dispose of his estate and whether he would remember his relations, Richard replied: 'doe not trouble me about them for I was never Five shillings the better by any of them, and what Estate I have, I got the same by and under Mr Carr, And what I have I give

246 Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1998), 105.
247 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1661/M10/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1661/L2/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1660/C1/1-6; DUL, DPR/I/1/1668/B13/1-2.
248 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/1-2.
249 Although a year further into his time, this is no guarantee that Richard was a year older.
250 The Stella branch of the family had mercantile interests and was involved in the local coal trade.
251 Alexandra Shepard and Judith Spicksley, 'Worth, Age, and Social Status in Early Modern England', *EcHR*, 64, 2 (2011), 493-530.

the same to William Carr … sonne of Mr William Carr [his old master].'[252] Contractual relationships between masters and apprentices were potentially short-term affairs, but as the case of Richard shows, they could also be enduring.[253]

That some masters specifically requested their apprentices help collect in their debts following their death is further recognition of the trust that existed between the two.[254] Although cash incentives were sometimes offered—suggesting not all apprentices leapt at the prospect of spending unrewarded hours chasing up outstanding debts—other merchants left cash bequests to their apprentices with no expectation that they provide further services after their death.[255] Along with two others, apprentice Thomas Pool was left part of his master's estate he held from the Dean and Chapter of Durham. Various cottages and buildings were contained on the estate and the condition was that his master's wife received the rents and the trio renew the lease every four years. They were also entrusted with £2,000, the interest of which was also to go to his wife.[256] In another example Joseph Atkinson left his 'Faithfull and diligent Apprentice' £200—a considerable sum.[257] The key issue is that acting as a witness, receiving a cash bequest or helping to collect outstanding debts served to cement the apprentice's ties with both the merchant's family and his social network. Wills were 'effective vehicles for statements about status' and by listing beneficiaries 'public association as well as personal affection' were acknowledged.[258] Community was a process of 'symbolic production', the means by which relationships were invested with meaning and wills are one example of how this was achieved between merchants and their apprentices.[259]

2.4 The experience of Ralph Jackson

A chance to consider in more detail the process by which apprentices assimilated into the merchant community is offered with the diary of Ralph Jackson. As noted earlier, Ralph was apprenticed to the Newcastle Hostman William Jefferson in 1749 when he was thirteen years old and began to keep a diary that, aside from a brief period in 1754-5, he maintained until his death in 1790. The diary is a rich source of information on many aspects of merchant life in eighteenth-century Newcastle and for present purposes we will concentrate on Ralph's

252 DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/T2/1-2.
253 Wrightson, 'Mutualities', 165-166.
254 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1668/B13/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1661/L2/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1661/W1/1-2.
255 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1674/E4/1-4.
256 DUL, DPR/I/1/1739/M8/1.
257 DUL, DPR/I/1/1713/A6/1.
258 Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, 114.
259 Withington and Shepard, 'Introduction', 8.

experience so far as it informs us about how he assimilated into the merchant community and learnt the culture of work.

The merchant culture of work was rooted in numeracy and cognitive skills that Ralph acquired early on in his apprenticeship from local tutors. Like most merchants, Ralph's master operated as part of a wider business and social network founded on credit relations. Both the Merchant Adventurers and the Company of Hostmen were regulated companies, which meant members traded independently on their own account rather than on a joint-stock basis. But the idea of a truly 'autonomous merchant' would be misleading as just about all buying and selling in the early modern period involved credit of some sort. This entangled households in 'interpersonal economic obligations' and meant market relations were characterised by communal bonds and strong notions of reciprocity. Within this 'moral economy' trust was essential to earn and maintain, and this was where personal networks developed.[260] As Ralph became acquainted with how these networks operated he took on the identity of a merchant and grew accustomed to the way of life it entailed.

Literacy, numeracy and the acquisition and application of information were central to merchant culture and Ralph's diary is particularly useful for illuminating how he acquired these skills. For Ralph, schooling commenced with his arrival in Newcastle and the start of his apprenticeship. Masters were not required to provide schooling for apprentices and the fact Ralph writes how he 'payd' for his 'Learnings' suggests payment came from his side.[261] He mentions various school tutors and the impression given is that education was tailored to fit around his apprenticeship. Lessons sometimes took place in the morning, other times in the afternoon; often in both 'forenoon and afternoon'. Some weeks he attended school almost daily, others just a few odd days. The last two references he makes to school are when he 'went to School a little while' in October 1752 and in the following November when he went to 'Mr Wilkinson's Psalmery School' one evening.[262] Assuming he never resumed his education during the period when he stopped writing the diary in 1754-5, it appears Ralph received schooling during the first three years of his apprenticeship, meaning he was around sixteen years old when this finished.

260 Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998), 5, Ch. 5; Craig Muldrew, 'Interpreting the Market: The Ethics of Credit and Community Relations in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 18, 2 (1993), 163-183.

261 TA, U/WJ/C, f.3. Dated Feb. 26, 1751.

262 TA, U/WJ/D, f. 104. Dated Oct. 19, 1752; TA, U/WJ/E, f. 6. Dated Nov. 15, 1752.

A good deal of the tuition Ralph received was in writing and arithmetic.[263] A week after his arrival in Newcastle he records going to 'the writing & Erethmetick School' where he 'began in Substraction' three days later.[264] His description of 'the writing & Erithmetick School' clearly distinguishes it from Newcastle Grammar School.[265] In the eighteenth century Newcastle Grammar School was mostly patronised by children of Ralph's social background, the middling sort, though as it retained its classical curriculum attendance was of little use for those setting out for a life in business.[266] Many youths intending to be merchants received training at writing schools or from private tutors, often during their apprenticeship, which we can see was the case with Ralph when he writes of going to 'Mr Turnbull's School' to pick up his 'Syphering Book' and taking his 'Counting to M^{r} Turnbulls', evidently a tutor schooling him in arithmetic.[267] The diary also shows learning took place informally between children of a similar age. Ralph became friendly with Billy, a nephew of his master living nearby, and was a regular visitor to his house. Of one occasion he wrote how he had 'heard Billy … [say] his Multiplycation Table'; on another he 'helped Billy to work some Questions in Fractions'.[268] There was also the time he went to get his 'Syphering Book' in order to 'Let Billy see how to do several Questions in Fractions'.[269] Entries like these show the boys helped each other with their education which must have been fairly common, especially in households with two or more apprentices at different stages in their training.

Books were another important source of information and instruction for apprentice merchants. Some books Ralph mentions supplemented the lessons he was receiving at school, such as the copy of Thomas Dilworth's book on arithmetic he bought in 1750.[270] Others were more specific to his trade. Six months into his apprenticeship Ralph asked his master 'for a book to read' one night and received a copy of the 'Compleate Traidman', likely Defoe's *Complete English Tradesman*.[271] Published in 1726, this was a conduct book

263 With respect to writing, the diary itself is the best guide to Ralph's progress: entries becoming increasingly articulate over time.

264 TA, U/WJ/A, f.1. Dated Oct. 23, 1749; TA, U/WJ/A, f. 2. Dated Oct. 26, 1749.

265 TA, U/WJ/B, f. 45. Dated Dec. 22, 1750.

266 Gordon Hogg, 'Achievement Amidst Decay 1700-1820', in *Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne: A History of the School in its Community*, eds. Brian Mains and Anthony Tuck (Stocksfield, 1986), 54.

267 Natasha Glaisyer, *The Culture of Commerce in England, 1660-1720* (London, 2006), 110; Grassby, *Business Community*, 190-192; TA, U/WJ/B, f. 48. Dated Oct. 17, 1750; TA, U/WJ/D, f. 78. Dated Sep. 16, 1752; TA, U/WJ/A, f. 11. Dated Feb. 5, 1750. This is probably William Turnbull, a Newcastle schoolmaster whose probate is dated 1771. See: DUL, DPR/I/1/1771/T10/1-2.

268 TA, U/WJ/B, f.8. Dated July 30, 1750; TA, U/WJ/D, f.66. Dated Aug. 20, 1752.

269 TA, U/WJ/D, f.78. Dated Sep. 16, 1752.

270 TA, U/WJ/B, f. 23. Dated Sep. 17, Ralph's reference to 'Dilworth's Arithmetick' was most likely a book by Thomas Dilworth, a schoolmaster who published works such as *The Schoolmasters Assistant: being a Compendium of Arithmetic, both Practical and Theoretical* , which had gone through four editions by the time Ralph was writing.

271 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 18. Dated Feb. 17, 1750.

designed for those entering the business world and offered advice on most aspects of the profession, with a particular stress on the importance of maintaining a stock of business credit, advice that likely drew approval from Ralph's master.[272] The book takes the form of a series of letters and particularly relevant for Ralph was the one addressed to apprentices. This instructs them to develop a good judgement of wares and to familiarise themselves with their master's suppliers and his books; it also emphasises the need to learn how to buy goods.[273] Defoe's book was only one in a growing genre aimed at merchants. Many took the form of advice manuals while others offered readers information on trade and commerce; frequently they did both.[274] Ralph received the book when he was still only around fourteen years old, and whilst we cannot say for certain what, if anything, he personally drew from it, that his master gave him a copy indicates the role such advice manuals potentially had in the education of merchant apprentices.

When it came to acquiring the skills more specific to a Newcastle coal trader, Ralph's experience shows apprentices learnt through a combination of instruction by their master and by accompanying others as they went about their duties—essentially on the job training. Paying the keelmen was, for example, usually done on a Saturday and Ralph often went with the person responsible, as when he 'went with Thos. Retley to Pay the Men'.[275] However, a year or so into his apprenticeship, when he was aged around fourteen years old, Ralph's responsibilities were increasing and he was working more independently, noting in September 1750 that he paid the keelmen himself for the first time.[276] Further evidence that apprentices were taught by example can be seen with the job of clearing ships. Two years after paying the keelmen for the first time alone Ralph wrote: 'Mr Millan came up to clear and I got Ra: Morton to go along with me for I had never Clear'd a Ship before, then I went with him myself to the Towns house and we cleared the Ship'.[277] It is probable that he learnt many other aspects of trade in a similar fashion.

One of the most important aspects of training to be a merchant was learning to negotiate the complex credit networks that characterised early modern market relations. Practically all merchants traded on credit and Ralph's frequent mention of bills, whether getting 'acceptance for a Bill', sitting down to 'draw a bill' or making his way across

272 Dana N. Stevens, 'Review: The Shortest Way to Success: A Review of Defoe's "The Complete English Tradesman"', *The American Economist*, 21, 1 (1977), 55-59; Paula R. Backscheider, 'Defoe, Daniel (1660?–1731), writer and businessman', *ODNB*.
273 Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman, in Familiar Letters* (Dublin, 1726), 8-21.
274 Glaisyer, *Culture of Commerce*, 102-109.
275 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 19. Dated Mar. 3, 1750.
276 TA, U/WJ/B, f.21. Dated Sep. 22, 1750.
277 TA, U/WJ/D, f. 88. Dated Sept. 28, 1752.

Newcastle for 'payment' of a bill, show that by his second year he was closely involved in his master's finances.[278] Whether they were bills obligatory, bills of exchange or less formal arrangements of credit that were commonly extended for goods and services during the early modern period is not always clear.[279] A bill obligatory was a bill or bond which acknowledged the debt and stated when it was to be settled, usually one, three, six or twelve months hence.[280] Bills of exchange were written promises for payment that could be assigned to a third party in the same town where the goods were purchased; they were essential in international trade as they breached the time lags of exchange.[281] 'Inland bills of exchange' were developed from these international bills to aid the transfer of payments over long distances and took the form of a written promise to pay and could be drawn upon elsewhere or assigned to a third party.[282] The banking system in England was such that most merchants held accounts in London and paid each other by transference from one account to another by bills drawn in the capital. The same system enabled funds to be drafted from London to provincial centres.[283]

This was the system of credit the merchant apprentice was expected to negotiate on behalf of his master. Successfully doing so required the apprentice to uphold the trust other merchants deposed in their master by ensuring accounts were settled on time. Numerous examples exist of Ralph operating in this role, a typical example being when he 'went into the Office & begun to draw a bill for Mr Pyeman on Mr Rich^{d} Franck Coal merch^{t} in London for £22. 18s. 2¾d'.[284] Ralph mentions many of the transactions he was involved with, some of which involved cash sums. On one occasion he 'went up to Mr Fetherston's Office wth £150 of Bills & £50 of Gold', on another he went 'wth a £90.0 Bill & £30.0 in cash'. A different transaction saw him entrusted with £100 in cash.[285] That Ralph recorded the amounts in his diary suggests a degree of satisfaction on his part in dealing with such sums. 'I received the £180.0.0 for the Bill', he wrote of one occasion, 'after I came home I stayed in the Parlour sometime before my Master came in to receive the money and then he sent me to M^{r} Fetherston's Office with £100.0.0 in Money & a bill for £115.12.10 w^{ch} in all made

278 TA, U/WJ/E, f.83. Dated June 21, 1753; TA, U/WJ/E, f. 66. Dated May 25, 1753.
279 Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 96.
280 Ibid., 110; Eric Kerridge, *Trade and Banking in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1988), 39-42.
281 Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 191; G. C. A Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*, vol. 1, *People, Land and* Towns (Cambridge, 1984), 183.
282 Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470-1750* (London, 2000), 174; Kerridge, *Trade and Banking*, Ch. 4; Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 114-115.
283 Kerridge, *Trade and Banking*, 47.
284 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 66. Dated May 25, 1753.
285 TA, U/WJ/C, f. 25. Dated May 9, 1751; TA, U/WJ/C, f. 54. Dated Aug. 21, 1751; TA, U/WJ/C, f. 110. Dated Apr. 14, 1752.

£215.12.10.'[286] That apprentices were responsible for upholding their master's credit relations can be seen in other entries, such as when Ralph 'went to M^{r} Thomas Simpsons & got acceptance for a Bill' and to 'M^{r} W^{m} Handaside for payment of another Bill', who told him he 'wou'd pay it next week'. After dinner on the same day he went to 'the above said Handaside & got acceptance in writing' and also called in at 'M^{r} Robt. Maddison's Lodgings (vide 20th Ins^{tn}.) & from M^{r} Handasides', presumably for the same purpose. Afterwards he 'went to M^{r} Thomas Simpson's Office & received a Bill of his younger Brother for £23.'[287] Towards the end of his apprenticeship he was in the position to correct the mistakes of others, writing

> I settled an Acco^{t} with Sam^{l} Campion, own^{r} of the Triton of Whitby, at the sign of the Ship (Vigilant) in the Milk Markett Sandgate, when I paid him a Ball^{ce} of the Acco^{t} of £5:0^{s}:6^{d} w^{ch} he gave me a Receipt for, but wrong worded it, calling it for short measure instead of Ball^{ce} of an Acco^{t}, I propose to settle this more to my Master & my own satisfaction when I see M^{r} Campion.[288]

Handling bills and dealing directly with business associates shows how merchant apprentices operated at the centre of their master's business network. Credit relations were upheld through face-to-face contact and from the diary we can see how this sociability worked on a daily basis in the merchant community. In an entry quoted above for example, Ralph records how he 'went into the Office & begun to draw a bill for Mr Pyeman on Mr Rich^{d} Franck Coal merch^{t} in London' but was interrupted when his master 'called … [him] to dinner before it was done'.[289] One of his fellow diners was the same Mr Pyeman, and it is noteworthy that Ralph's master 'called' him to dinner as this indicates his participation in the socialising that took place in the household between his master and other merchants. As the title 'Hostman' suggests, hosting was a traditional responsibility of members of the guild. In the Middle Ages Hostmen were responsible for sponsoring visiting merchants and in return the host was entitled to a fixed share of the value of the visiting merchant's wares as well as brokering trade with other locals.[290] Newcastle Hostmen essentially acted as intermediaries between the colliery owners and the ship masters, and part of their traditional role of hosts to

286 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 92. Dated July 7, 1753.
287 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 82. Dated June 21, 1753.
288 TA, U/WJ/F, ff. 33-34. Dated Nov. 18, 1756.
289 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 66. Dated May 25, 1753.
290 Dendy, *Records of The Company of Hostmen*, xiii.

'stranger' merchants can be discerned in the hospitality Ralph's master showed to the ship captains he dealt with, many of whom dined at his house.[291]

Evidence for the 'sociability of commerce' can be found elsewhere in the diary.[292] Some of the most important information merchants needed came from newspapers which were often read in local coffeehouses. England's first coffeehouse opened in Oxford in 1650 and was soon followed by others, particularly after the Restoration, and by the 1720s coffee and coffeehouses were 'firmly entrenched within English society.'[293] Stimulating effects aside, coffee was highly valued for its role in socialising within the burgeoning 'coffeehouse culture'. Coffee was like alcohol in that it was consumed in public spaces and could be used to facilitate social interaction, 'the collegiality and the mutual trust that was crucial to the success of an early modern merchant', but crucially it did not intoxicate.[294] The sobriety and thoughtfulness of the coffee-drinking man of business was a powerful image and one merchants actively sought to cultivate.[295] Above all coffeehouses offered merchants the chance to exchange business news and learn of fresh opportunities. This was the case for Ralph. Coffeehouses provided merchants with a setting within which social bonds could be established and maintained and were an established part of merchant culture by the time Ralph commenced his apprenticeship. Particularly later in his apprenticeship, when he was around nineteenth years old, he writes of going to 'read the London News at the Coffeehouse in the afternoon' or to 'read the London Papers at Greys Coffee' which places his acquisition of news and information within coffeehouse culture.[296]

Learning to operate within the business networks of his master was one way Ralph became familiar with merchant culture. Another was his socialisation into the merchant way of life that took place in his master's household. On his arrival in Newcastle in October 1749 he refers to his new household as 'Mr. Jefferson's' and a few weeks later records how he 'played Cards in my Masters House'.[297] But soon the phrases 'in our own house' and 'our house' are invariably used, as when 'Capt. Porret[,] his wife and two Gentlewomen dined at our house in the afternoon.'[298] It is also noticeable how expressions such as 'two

291 Ibid., xlviii.
292 Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 123.
293 Brian William Cowan, 'The Social Life of Coffee: Commercial Culture and Metropolitan Society in Early Modern England, 1600-1720', Princeton University PhD thesis (2000), vol. 1, 8, 116-118.
294 Ibid., 8, 100; Glaisyer, *Culture of Commerce*, 30-33, 43, 156.
295 Jon Stobart, *Sugar & Spice*: *Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650-1830* (Oxford, 2013), 271-272.
296 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 151. Dated May 25, 1756; TA, U/WJ/E, f. 149. Dated May 21, 1756; TA, U/WJ/E, f. 156. Dated May 28, 1756.
297 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 1. Dated Oct. 18, 1749; TA, U/WJ/A, f. 3. Dated Nov. 10, 1749.
298 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 4. Dated Nov. 24, 1749; TA, U/WJ/B, f. 10. Dated Aug. 3, 1750.

Gentlewomen' and 'some other Gentlemen', indicating the people in question were unknown to Ralph, disappear as he became familiar with his master's social network.[299] Indeed two years into his apprenticeship he thought it worthwhile to record 'a gentleman (unknown to me) dined at our house'; by this time it was far more common for him to refer to individuals by name.[300]

Becoming part of a new household was not always a smooth process. We saw earlier how Ralph occasionally had minor spats with his master but his relationship with Jenny was more problematic. Who Jenny was remains unclear. Ralph mentions her father coming to the house, though no surname is given to indicate whether or not she was related to Jefferson. Most likely she was a servant, as on one occasion Ralph writes how he 'gave Jenny … [his] dirty Linnen to go and wash'.[301] Jenny emerges as a slightly troubled individual and Ralph describes her 'bad humor' and 'mad' and 'Huffish fits' that could turn minor disagreements into more serious incidents.[302] In one such episode Jenny 'fell out' with Jefferson and threatened to 'Jump out of the window', causing Ralph and his master to sit up past midnight to keep an eye on her. Another time Ralph was called by his master and found him 'Strugling with Jenny to get a String from about her neck' with which they feared 'she was going to Strangle herself'.[303] Relating another breakdown in household relations, Ralph wrote

> Jenny was very quarellsome and struck at me with the Collrake and several times with her hands but at Billy's desire I did not strike again so I sat up till my Master came in and then he asked us what was the matter, he was angry at us both but particularly at me till Billy wakened and then he begun to calm a little and begun to talk abo[t]. my familly.[304]

The cause of the fracas turned out to be Jenny's insults towards Ralph's uncle Ward, whom she called a 'Lieing Scandalous, Idle fellow'.[305] Of course, we only have Ralph's version of events and the fact his master was angry at him suggests he was not entirely innocent; that he 'did not strike again' at Jenny also implies guilt on Ralph's part. This is, however, the only recorded episode of physical violence between Ralph and Jenny. Various other exchanges of insults occurred without developing into anything more serious. Nor, apparently, was there any lasting hostility between the two, as the last time Ralph mentions Jenny they were

299 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 4. Dated Nov. 21, 1749.
300 TA, U/WJ/C, f. 66. Dated Oct. 7, 1751.
301 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 56. Dated June 4, 1753.
302 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 23. Dated Feb. 25, 1750; TA, U/WJ/B, f. 31. Dated Nov. 13, 1750; TA, U/WJ/C, f. 56. Dated Feb. 29, 1752.
303 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 45. Dated Apr. 12, 1750; TA, U/WJ/B, f. 8. Dated Sep. 23, 1750.
304 TA, U/WJ/D, ff. 80-81. Dated Sep. 20, 1752.
305 TA, U/WJ/D, ff. 80-81. Dated Sep. 20, 1752.

drinking tea together, as they often did.[306] Assuming Jenny was indeed a servant, as an apprentice Ralph had a higher status within the household, which likely created tension between them. Such incidents tested and reinforced the household hierarchy and further demonstrate how relationships were the result of negation on both sides.

Ralph's assimilation into urban life and the merchant community took place in households besides his own. The place Ralph most frequently visited was the home of Ann Hudspeth. Ann was the sister of Ralph's master, William Jefferson, and had been married to the Hostman Robert Hudspeth.[307] Robert commenced his apprenticeship in 1723, around seven months after William, and although they had different masters, both trained with Hostmen and it seems probable that their relationship predated Robert's marriage to William's sister Ann.[308] The Hudspeths lived in All Saints parish and whilst it is unclear exactly which part of Newcastle Jefferson lived, the frequency of Ralph's visits to Ann's home suggests it was reasonably close.[309] Ann's husband Robert died several years before Ralph came to Newcastle in 1749 and it would appear that she continued to earn a living from the coal trade after his death. Her signature appears on a 1750 document that lists the keelmen each Hostman employed and again in the Newcastle Chamberlain Accounts from 1756, this time in connection with clearing shipments of coal.[310] She also appears to have conducted business with her brother, as in one diary entry Ralph writes how his master sent him to the office to 'copy over some of Mrs Hudspeths Acco^{t} between Themselves'. The following day he was instructed to make an account 'wherein Mrs Hudspeth was debtor £4 14^{s} 8^{d}.'[311] Visiting Ann's house could therefore be a matter of business or pleasure, both of which involved sociability and hospitality.

There can be little doubt that Ann played an important role in Ralph's assimilation into the merchant community. With his master unmarried, Ann provided Ralph with some of the maternal care he lost when he left the parental home. Throughout his time in Newcastle Ralph usually went to Ann's house several times a week; sometimes for an hour or so to drink tea or coffee or play cards with whoever was there, other times to dine. Ann had a son

306 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 18. Dated Aug. 20, 1753.

307 DUL, DPR/I/3/A112/A; DUL, DPR/I/3/1740/A33. William Jefferson is listed along with Ann on Robert Hudspeth's administrative bond.

308 Dendy, *Records of the Company of Hostmen*, 294; DUL, DPR/I/3/1765/A60/1; DUL, DPR/1765/A112/A. The Newcastle mercantile connection continued with Robert and Ann's daughter, also called Ann, who married William Robinson, a master mariner. William and Ann Robinson were appointed administrators to the estate of William Jefferson when he died intestate in 1765.

309 DUL, DPR/I/3/1765/A60/1.

310 Peter Wright, *Life on the Tyne: Water Trades on the Lower River Tyne in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, a Reappraisal* (Abingdon, 2014), 141.

311 TA, U/WJ/D, f. 7. Dated Aug. 4, 1752; TA, U/WJ/D, f.7. Dated Aug. 5, 1752.

William, known as ‘Billy’, who seems to have been a similar age to Ralph and the two struck up a friendship. Particularly during the early stages of his apprenticeship, the frequency of his visits suggests Ralph derived much comfort from having Ann and Billy in his life. Ann eased his transition into Newcastle society in such a way that cautions us against focussing too much on the relationship between apprentice and master. Apprenticeship was a contractual relationship that carried strict obligations on both parts, but Ralph’s experience of domestic hospitality tells us a broader social network provided the vital emotional support he needed as he learnt what it meant to be a merchant and the approach to urban living this entailed.

2.5 Assimilation into the Company of Merchant Adventurers

Important as it was for the apprentice to become part of his master’s household-family and gain the trust of his social network, this was only one aspect of the process by which he joined the merchant community. As far as the Company of Merchant Adventurers was concerned, being a member of the organisation involved sharing its values and observing its codes of behaviour. From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, throughout England guild supervision of apprentices became more marked. Some organisations devised rules to regulate the relationship between master and apprentice while others supplanted or supported masters in control of their apprentices during the hours they spent outside of work.[312] Guilds often organised sociable activities outside working hours to foster bonds between members, something King has researched in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Durham and Newcastle. She explains that throughout the seventeenth century attending social occasions was regarded ‘as an important way of instilling appropriate values’ in apprentices. Participating in festivities ensured they ‘were enculturated into the value system of the guild’ and learnt the appropriate values of restraint in eating and drinking whilst showing due obedience to elders and betters.[313]

The Merchant Adventurers shared these values and when it came to enforcing codes of behaviour amongst apprentices the logic applied was that their individual actions defined the reputation of the collective. This tells us that the company’s reading of the relationship between itself and its apprentices reflects seventeenth-century notions of community as something created through the actions of its members.[314] Connecting individual behaviour to

312 Olive Jocelyn Dunlop, ‘Some Aspects of Early English Apprenticeship’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1911), 200.
313 King, ‘Aspects of Sociability’, 46.
314 Withington and Shepard, ‘Introduction’, 9-10.

the reputation of the company helped foster an emotional relationship between the two, making it more than just an institutional relationship. As we saw earlier, contemporaries understood youth as a difficult period of transition where the values of the adult world were internalised. Youths were expected to challenge and criticise social norms and to counter these dangerous tendencies careful instruction was needed to keep them on the straight and narrow.[315] Although company intervention was generally directed at apprentices already serving their time, they were also issued with the intention of controlling from which sections of society recruits were drawn. In 1564 the court announced that members were not to take youths 'borne and brought up in Tynedale or Riddesdale' or any other place where 'the parties' were known 'either by Education or nature not to bee of honest consideration'.[316] Although the court revoked the restriction in 1677, their explanation for the decision shows their underlying prejudices were still intact:

> [we] hath thought it fitt and expedient to repeale part of the said Act, in regard those parts are more civilized then formerly: Yett nevertheless, this Court considering that there are many who yet doe comitt frequent thefts and other Felonys; soe that if this Company or any Member thereof should admit, or take, off thieves sons Apprentices proceeding from such leude and wicked Progenitors, it will be noe smale dishonoure to the said Company, and Members thereof.[317]

Clearly the company's concern of felonious apprentices remained strong and their decision to withdraw the ban on recruiting apprentices from Redesdale and Tynedale was only made because these areas had become 'civilized'.[318]

Company intervention was more frequently directed at apprentices already serving their time. In particular, values of restraint were asserted in an attempt to moderate the mode of living. In 1562 it had been ordered that any apprentice 'knowne to be a fornicator or whoremonger dureing the tyme of his Apprnticeshipp' was to forfeit the years prior to the incident, which he would have to serve again. A fine of £13 6s 8d was imposed. Such

315 Walter, 'Faces in the Crowd', 105.

316 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 31l. Redesdale and Tynedale suffered from a lack of clergy and were singled out for the 'Desolation of the Congregation' during the lifetime of the preacher Bernard Gilpin (1516–1584), with the inhabitants supposedly never hearing the 'Word of God' preached among them. Likely this contributed to the poor reputation the area held in the mind of the company. See George Carleton, *The Life of Bernard Gilpin* (London, 1727), 29.

317 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 15.

318 There was another motive behind the decision. By the seventeenth century the coal industry relied heavily on the southward migration of Scots and men from Redesdale and Tynedale to replenish its workforce, and although the court did not openly acknowledge this, likely their decision to lift the restriction was made with this in mind. See: C. M. Fraser and Kenneth Emsley, 'Newcastle Merchant Adventurers from West Yorkshire' *AA*, 5th Series, 6 (1978), 117.

measures were evidently insufficient as in 1655, from 'woefull experience (especially in these later yeares)', it was noted that the 'penalty before named, is to them Inconsiderable as to the preventinge of these miscarriages', adding how 'divers Apprentices … [have] fallen into that abominable sinne of fornication.'[319] In addition to forfeiting all time served before the incident as in the 1562 act, the fine was increased to a hefty £100. In 1675 it was once again ordered that no apprentice should marry or commit fornication upon fine of £100.[320] The Company of Hostmen had similar issues. In 1734 it was discovered that George Waters had married before his indenture was signed and the company voted in support of the proposal that 'no person that is or has at any time been Married shall be Inrolled an apprentice.'[321] Crucially, the company equated apprentice misdemeanours with their own honour. The 'shame of this Fellowshipp and theire owne ruine' is the phrase they repeatedly use, the suggestion being that the collective was the summation of individual actions.[322]

A similar argument was put forward when other instances of poor apprentice behaviour came to the attention of the Merchant Adventurers. Part of the condition of indenture was that apprentices refrain from gambling and carousing in alehouses. Evidence suggests they were reluctant to comply. In 1655 the company complained it was 'to theire owne prejudice & discredit to this Fellowshipp' that 'younge men at their admissions … spent great sumes of money at Taverns; in wyne and other extraordinaries'.[323] Similar 'Insolency in behaviour' was noted later in the year.[324] In an effort to curb this persistent problem, in 1697 the company ordered that no apprentice was to frequent 'Taverns or Alehouses, neither shall absent himself from his Masters house at any time, upon any pretence, without leave.'[325] A few years later, in 1705, the Hostmen similarly complained 'That at p^{r}esent sundry Apprentices complained upon for their disorderly lives & playing unlawfull Games & absenting themselves at nights from their Mast^{r} houses.'[326] One area the Merchant Adventurers were particularly insistent on was the appearance of apprentices. Each was to 'cutt his haire from the Crowne of the heade, keepe his forheade bare, his locks (if any) shall not reach below the lap of his eare, and the same lengths observed behind.'[327] Clothing was another area where norms were enforced. Beaver hats were banned, as were

319 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 40.
320 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 64.
321 T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 740.
322 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 40.
323 T&WA, GU/MA/4, 53.
324 T&WA, GU/MA/4, 40.
325 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 234.
326 T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 513.
327 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 41.

those containing gold or silver work. Cloth for apparel was to cost 14-15s per yard and should not be silk or camelhair. More specifically, clothes were to be 'made plaine and without lace or any other trimminge except buttons, and then onely in places needfull, and no better then of silke.' Cuffs were forbidden; gloves were permitted provided they were 'plaine'. Regarding shoes, any that were white or coloured, made from Spanish leather or 'long nebd' were out. Boots were deemed too flashy.[328]

Further complaints were made about the 'exhorbitant practices of the Apprentices' in 1697. If their 'extravagancy and profuceness in Wiggs and Apparell[,] theire indecency in theire behaviour and vainely mispending theire time' was 'not timely prevented', it would 'tend to the dishonor of God' and, once again, be a 'greate affront to this Company.'[329] An act was also passed that barred any apprentice (until he served seven years) from attending fencing contests, dancing schools, music houses, playhouses or partaking in lotteries. The keeping of horses, hunting dogs and fighting cocks was also banned. Apparel once again came under fire, this time the wearing of lace, silk, any garment with gold and silver trimmings, 'any Imbrodiry at all' or 'Ruffles att theire breasts, necks, or sleeves. No long or short wigs were to be worn above the value of fifteen shillings.[330] Material possessions were not the only things singled out for legislation. No apprentice Merchant Adventurer was to 'passe by any brother of this Company without civill respect at least by uncoveringe his head, and that not slightly but submissively.'[331] When this was reiterated in 1697 it was added this was to be done with 'all due respect.'[332]

These ordinances tell us that the relationship between apprentice and company was carefully policed. The company promoted a standardised social role for their apprentices built around the qualities of sobriety, diligence and godliness. The key point, however, is that the company tried to foster collective cohesion by using the rhetoric of mutuality and obligation. Equating the 'shame of this Fellowshipp' with the apprentice's 'owne ruine' was an attempt to instil apprentices with a sense of duty towards the collective. This created a relationship of mutual obligation, a duty to do right by the community from which one profited as a member. Membership was symbolic as well as material: besides the economic

328 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 41.
329 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 234.
330 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 234.
331 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 41.
332 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 234.

benefits there was social capital in being a Merchant Adventurer.[333] This relationship was constitutive of the personal and social identity of the apprentice as a Merchant Adventurer.[334]

To fully understand the point of these company ordinances it is helpful to recall early modern perceptions of youth. Youth was often described in negative terms as a 'dark' and 'dangerous age' by those seeking to bring attention to its 'disreputable characteristics' which 'stirred anxiety in the studies, pulpits, and courtrooms of early modern England.'[335] Official discourse accepted the 'political necessity of regulating youth' and for moralists youth was the 'best opportunity to save souls and plant political conformity'.[336] Not all attention was negative. Positive images of the heroic apprentice in chapbooks and ballads aimed to inspire diligence and hard work and it has been argued that such literature cultivated an 'apprentice culture' and identity, a subculture with a tradition of its own.[337] Nevertheless, the understanding that apprentices—and youths in general—were in need of careful monitoring and guidance in order to ensure they did not challenge authority and their position within society was widely held.

Companies such as the Merchant Adventurers were part of this wider enforcement of social norms amongst apprentices which raises the question of whose values they were promoting, their own or those of society? From the evidence discussed above we can see that the company tried to enforce similar moral injunctions as masters were expected to instil in apprentices under their charge, namely the provision of moral and religious instruction and the prohibition of marriage and fornication.[338] These values were held throughout early modern society. Historians stress how 'spasms of activity against sexual licentiousness and idle sports, swearing and gambling, were a routine feature of English parochial life' and whilst efforts to police personal conduct can be found extending over previous centuries, with the advent of Protestantism there was a 'permanent tilt in the pattern of regulation' and offensives against personal conduct were 'unprecedented' in their vigour.[339] Societies for the 'reformation of manners' formed after the Glorious Revolution had the same aim of purging public and private life of vice and dissolute behaviour and restoring lost practices.[340] Societies

333 John Edward Field, *Social Capital* (London, 2008), 20.
334 Wrightson, 'Mutualities', 166-167.
335 Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 34-35.
336 Ibid., 18, 40.
337 Smith, 'London Apprentices', 47.
338 Ibid., 150-152.
339 Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), 142.
340 After the 1688 Glorious Revolution reformers argued a 'reformation of manners' was necessary to purge society of the negative effects of the excesses of the Jacobean court which had supposedly trickled down through society. See Karen Sonnelitter, 'The Reformation of Manners Societies, the Monarchy, and the English State, 1696-1714', *The Historian*, 72, 3 (2010), 517-542.

for manners argued that the decline of moral behaviour posed a direct threat to the social order and the security of the state, and whilst not specifically targeting adolescents, their behaviour was under scrutiny.[341]

The climate within which the Merchant Adventures issued the ordinances quoted above was, therefore, one of reformation; rectifying perceived deficiencies in moral conduct was a prime concern. There was nothing new in attempting to instruct children and adolescents in godliness and personal conduct, something guilds had long been involved in. Company records dating from the sixteenth century show the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers had been attempting to control the behaviour of apprentices long before the 'reformation of manners'. Taking all this together, we can say that the values and behaviours the Merchant Adventurers tried to enforce amongst their apprentices were consistent with those held in wider society. It was these values that were seen to preserve social harmony and were promoted by the merchant guilds for the same purpose: to encourage accord and stability within the merchant community.

2.6 Continuing the lifecycle: community bonds after apprenticeship

The Merchant Adventurers did not only try to regulate the personal conduct of their apprentices. The conduct of all members came under scrutiny and from company records we can see that those neglectful in this area were subject to reprimand. Any member coming into court without his cloak was, for instance, liable to a fine of 5s.[342] Coarse or undignified behaviour 'not fitt for Merchants' was frowned upon, a phrase appealing to a merchant's sense of social status in the hope he would see his responsibility to set a good example to others.[343] For a similar reason, no member was to 'Call too, or invite aine Person either by word, or anie signe, to come to theire Shopps, or Sellers, while such Person is either speaking with another of this Fellowshipp'. Rather than 'goeing with them to shew them any Commodity … [members] shall dilligently attend theire Customers.'[344] Outward gestures of unity between members were a priority and always encouraged. Any member of the Merchant Adventurers was allowed to use the company's silver plate and cups for christenings, weddings or funerals.[345] It was also a tradition that all members should 'accompany the

341 Ibid.
342 T&WA, GU/MA, f. 4.
343 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 58.
344 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 58.
345 T&WA, GU/MA4, f. 47; T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 66.

Corps of any Brother or his wife deceased unto the Church and place of Buriall', with a fine of 8d for those neglecting to do so.[346] Over the course of the seventeenth century this practice of communal mourning was in decline throughout the guilds of Newcastle and Durham.[347] Nevertheless, in 1686 the Merchant Adventurers received twelve new black mourning cloaks and a velvet pall from London, of which they 'very well approved.'[348] These were to be available to all 'For the honoure of the Company in the decent Interment of its Members' and when not in use to be kept in a 'Wainscot Press' sealed with the 'Company Seale.'[349] Visual demonstrations of guild unity were still valued.

From these directives we can see that bonds of community were reinforced at different points throughout the lifecycle. Apprenticeship brought youths into the merchant community but that was only one stage in an on-going process. And it was not just the company that contributed. We have already seen how merchants cemented bonds with their apprentices by making bequests in their wills and from this same source we can see how friendship networks that augmented and sometimes replaced families were reinforced.[350] Fellow Newcastle merchants often served as executors or supervisors to their 'good friend' while others received gifts in recognition of their friendship (some both).[351] William Harrison, for example, left Joseph Green his watch and horse.[352] Mark Whitfield also received a watch from Robert Forster while Thomas Salkeld left his 'Silver Hilted Sword' and cane to Thomas Partis.[353] In 1691 Mathew Kirkley left Richard Butler his 'two black Coates.'[354] Often more substantial legacies were given. Thomas Nicholson stipulated that after the death of his wife Jane, his friend and fellow merchant Mark Ward was to receive his 'dwelling house' on Pilgrim Street together with the adjoining mill and his garden in Gallowgate.[355] Edward Freeman left all his goods and personal estate to two local merchants.[356] Cash was also commonly bequeathed from one merchant to another.[357] On other occasions merchants called on their friends to oversee financial bequests made in their wills. Ambrose Barnes, a renowned puritan merchant from Newcastle, was one of the 'Loveing freinds' Henry

346 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 27.
347 King, 'Aspects of Sociability', 61-62.
348 T&WA, MA/2/1, f. 138-f. 139.
349 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 139.
350 Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, 71-72.
351 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1725/G5/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1670/P5/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1668/B13/1-2.
352 DUL, DPR/I/1/1710/H4/1.
353 DUL, DPR/I/1/1708/F8/1.
354 DUL, DPR/I/1/1691/K5/1-2.
355 DUL, DPR/I/1/1695/N3/1. Thomas also had a sister, son and brother. They all received bequests but it was Mark Ward who got his house.
356 DUL, DPR/I/1/1692/F11/1.
357 DUL, DPR/I/1/1713/A6/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1689/B3/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/F2/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1677/E5/1-2.

Thompson entrusted with the task of investing 'for the best advantage [and] benefitt' the £600 he set aside as portions for his son and daughter.[358] Other merchant friends were left money with the instruction that they disburse it to local charity schools.[359] Further instances show how social networks were called on to care for the family the deceased left behind. Robert Lawson is an example of one appointing his 'Loveing friend' and fellow merchant Mathew Jefferson to be guardian to his two sons.[360] In a like manner, Robert Roddam and Robert Fenwick, 'loveing friends' of Joshua Oley, were to take charge of the profits of his estate if his wife remarried during the minorities of their children.[361]

To a large extent these examples should be regarded as evidence of friendships that endured until time of death. It is important to keep this in sight when introducing theoretical explanations which should not impose artificial meanings to human relationships. But it seems valid to present these cases as evidence of 'binding social capital', a phrase Putnam uses to describe the 'kind of sociological superglue' which creates strong in-group loyalty.[362] Such an interpretation should not overlook the conflictual nature of communities. Rivalries were common amongst merchants and insults frequently exchanged. The later often came to the attention of the courts in the form of claims of defamation, such as when Jonathan Thompson directed 'scandalous words' towards Francis Thompson which the court 'very ill resented'.[363] On another occasion George Whinfield directed 'very reflecting and unbeseeming langauge' towards Christopher Wetherall.[364] In 1669 the Merchant Adventurers heard further complaints that members of the court were using 'words and Actions … not fitt for Merchants to use', that phrase used again to insinuate that on account of their status merchants had a social responsibility to act in a dignified manner. Underhand selling tactics were also brought to the attention of the court. In their response they ordered that 'in theire selling, they [members] shall not undervalue, or disgrace theire Neighbours goods.'[365] It is also revealing that the Merchant Adventurers felt it necessary to order that one member was not allowed to prosecute another under common law or 'any other Court whatsoever without special licence of the Governor of this Fellowshipp.' The governor was to have 'Intelligence

358 DUL, DPR/I/1/1664/T9/1-4.
359 DUL, DPR/I/1/1729/C14/1.
360 DUL, DPR/I/1/1664/L5/1-2.
361 DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/O2/1. The relationship between Robert Roddam and Joshua is particularly interesting as Joshua was apprenticed to Robert in 1662 and subsequently married his daughter Mary. See DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/O2/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1682/R24/1.
362 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000), 23.
363 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 143.
364 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 14.
365 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 58.

of the matter in Controversie [and] shall call before hym both the parties, and see if he can either by his Industry, or the indeavour of other of the Fellowshipp, to order and agree the matter without further trouble or charges.'[366]

Clearly the merchant community was far from harmonious and members were often openly hostile to each other. But conflict is an intrinsic part of communities and, moreover, the fact the company sought to punish those who made scandalous remarks to others or were found to be employing suspect selling tactics shows it aimed to ease tensions and create a sense of common purpose.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that apprenticeship offered crucial socialisation for youths migrating to Newcastle. This process of assimilation began with the master who taught youths what it meant to head a household and introduced them to urban life. Chapters Four and Five will look more closely at merchant housing and material culture and this chapter has anticipated these topics by showing how important these surroundings were for apprentices by providing them with their first impressions of the merchant's approach to urban life. Assimilation into the merchant culture continued with the practical training apprentices received. Successfully operating in the moral economy required trust and communal bonds to be maintained. As we saw with Ralph Jackson, becoming familiar with the complex business networks of his master was crucial and taught him the value of fair and honest dealing. The merchant guilds acted to further integrate youths into the business community. Training to be a merchant was not simply about learning the trade but understanding what it meant to be a citizen. Early modern society saw youths in need of careful instruction and the merchant guilds formed part of this wider process of socialisation, most readily seen when they equated individual actions with the reputation of the guild as a whole. The message was clear: community was something created through the individual actions of *all* its members.

366 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 23.

Chapter Three

Apprenticeship and the Merchant Adventurers: Enrolments 1600-1750

3.1 Introduction

The last chapter argued that apprenticeship played an important role in bringing new people into the Newcastle merchant community and introducing them to the mores of urban living. Ahead of looking at the merchant way of life in more detail in the following chapters, the aim here is to provide a fine-grained analysis of apprentice enrolments to the Company of Merchant Adventurers between 1600 and 1750 to show how its social composition evolved. The chronology of the thesis has been extended to incorporate the first half of the seventeenth century. Doing so uncovers crucial long term change and enables the discussion to place the post-1660 period in context and make stronger claims about its significance. It will be shown that the social and geographical origins of apprentices contracted over time as recruits became increasingly drawn from the gentry while long-distance migration declined. These changes had important consequences for social relations in Newcastle. Firstly, it meant the merchant community was becoming less socially diverse. Secondly, the merchant elite that came to dominate the corporation politically (the topic of Chapter Six) was drawn from a narrowing social base, making it less representative of the occupational structure of the town. Overall this chapter provides a statistical description of recruitment to the merchant community as groundwork for the following chapters.

Throughout the period that concerns this chapter the institution of apprenticeship underwent considerable change. In most towns recruitment peaked around 1640 and whilst apprenticeship continued to be the favoured route into various manual trades and lucrative professions until the 1750s, numbers never reached these levels again. England's population stagnated between 1650 and 1750 and this played some part in lowering enrolments, but this alone does not account for dwindling numbers.[367] One key contributing factor was mounting disregard for the 1562 Statute of Artificers. As we saw in Chapter Two, the Statute of Artificers formalised many aspects of apprenticeship, most notably making seven years the minimum period training should last. However, from the 1650s onwards more and more

367 Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Sociability Mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800' in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke, 1994), 63-65.

people questioned the need for a seven-year apprenticeship and sought alternatives; as a result, by the early eighteenth century setting up in business or entering a trade without first serving an apprenticeship was far easier.[368] By the 1720s it was more common for people to acquire guild membership via patrimony (the custom whereby sons were granted admission to their father's guild) or purchase rather than apprenticeship, a clear indication of its diminishing role.[369]

Together with declining numbers, there was also a marked change in the social background of recruits. Between 1550 and 1650 there was a boom in urban apprenticeship. During this period of demographic expansion the value of agricultural produce acted as a push factor for the lesser gentry, yeomanry and husbandmen to send their children to be apprenticed in English towns. However, in the century after 1650, a stagnating population accompanied by high mortality and low fertility rates placed smallholders in a less competitive situation when it came to having the funds to apprentice children. With the push factor reduced, towns drew more apprentices from their own populations and long-distance migration became less common.[370] Compounding the problem as far as smallholders were concerned was the rising cost of apprenticeship. Entering apprenticeship required paying a 'premium' to the master, and as these rose even well-to-do families could find it prohibitively expensive. Premiums upwards of £100 became common after 1660; an elite overseas merchant could command as much as £400.[371] In the 1730s Defoe noted premiums had leapt from the £30 or £40 needed to secure a good merchant to £500 or £1,000, an increase that priced many households out of the market.[372] Cheaper options were available, with glaziers, haberdashers, leatherworkers, upholsters, grocers and the like typically commanding

368 Olive Jocelyn Dunlop and Richard D. Denman, *English Apprenticeship & Child Labour: A History* (New York, 1912), 107-13. See also John A. Shedd, 'The State Versus the Trades Guilds: Parliament's Soldier-Apprentices in the English Civil War Period, 1642-1655', *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 65 (2004). 105-116; Muriel C. McClendon, 'Reimagining a Community: Worker Protest and Illicit Artisans in Early Seventeenth-Century Norwich', *Journal of Urban History*, 42, 2 (2016), 363-376. For later examples of young men setting up as merchants without formal apprenticeship see David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1995) and R. G. Wilson, *Gentleman Merchants: The Merchant Community in Leeds 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971), 28.

369 Brooks, 'Apprenticeship', 65-72; Christopher Chalkin, *The Rise of the English Town, 1650-1850* (Cambridge, 2001), 61; Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*, 132. For other reasons behind the demise of apprenticeship see K. D. M. Snell, 'The Apprenticeship System in British History: the Fragmentation of a Cultural Institution', *History of Education*, 25, 4 (1996), 313-315. This adds that by the mid-eighteenth century there was some difficulty in applying the Statute of Artificers to trades that had not existed when it was created in 1563. Downward pressure on artisan real wages and unemployment amongst journeymen is also felt to have had an effect on apprentice expectations, as did changes to the work and payment of journeymen which placed a greater emphasis on piece rates.

370 Brooks, 'Apprenticeship', 69-71.

371 Ibid.

372 Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, 4th ed. (London, 1738), 147-150.

premiums ranging from £5 to £10 in Bristol during the 1660s—not insurmountable sums for middling households.[373] Even so, for many the most lucrative occupations remained out of reach.

One of the chief reason premiums were rising was the boom in enrolments that took place between 1550 and 1650. Families competed to enter the most profitable trades under the best masters which drove prices up, and despite the overall number of apprentices declining after 1650, apprenticeship remained sufficiently vibrant to keep premiums high.[374] The fact premiums varied so much contributed to the exclusivity of the more desirable occupations, reducing the social base of recruits to companies such as the Merchant Adventurers. According to Grassby, demand for apprenticeships amongst the landed sector was further stimulated by the growing popularity of primogeniture in the seventeenth century. Primogeniture emphasised the need to secure the male succession, and in an era of high infant mortality, made large families a necessary precaution. The downside to this strategy was that it left numerous younger children in need of a portion and there was 'no choice' other than to send them into the professions or find suitable apprenticeships.[375]

The point is important but we should not overstate how many apprentices came from the landed gentry. Whilst true that more gentlemen were apprenticing their sons, the term 'gentleman' was becoming increasingly flexible. There was no strict legal definition of a 'gentleman' in seventeenth-century England.[376] From the early sixteenth century onwards the traditional view that gentility was inherited from one's ancestors was being challenged by people such as William Harrison who argued it could be acquired through one's mode of living.[377] Many who came to style themselves 'gent' were in professional occupations; others came from the 'middling sort', those occupying 'the middle ground in the hierarchies of wealth, status and power'—manufacturers, farmers, tradesmen and the like.[378] Despite only

373 Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London, 1994), 91.

374 Brooks, 'Apprenticeship', 71. Defoe, *Complete English Tradesman*, 147-150 claims that inflated premiums were a result of wealthy parents offering larger sums to spare their children some of the less attractive aspects of apprenticeship and secure them a higher quality of living in their master's household.

375 Richard Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1995), 125, 112.

376 J. S. Morrill, *Cheshire 1630-1660: County Government and Society During the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1974), 14-16; Penelope J. Corfield, 'The Rivals: Landed and other Gentleman', in *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914: Essays in Honour of F. M. L. Thompson*, eds. Negley Harte and Roland Quinault (Manchester, 1996), 3.

377 William Harrison, 'Of Degrees of People in the Commonwealth' in Ralphaell Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1587), Ch. 5, 156, 162; Keith Wrightson, *English Society*, (London, 1982), 20.

378 Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society, 1680-1730* (London, 1982), 12-16; Keith Wrightson, '"Sorts of People" in Tudor and Stuart England', in *Middling Sort*, eds. Barry and Brooks, 49; Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Classes*: *Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, 1989), 3-6, 17.

'grasping the very bottom rung of the titular ladder', many claimed gentility.[379] In County Durham there was a marked increase in the number of families claiming gentry status in the fifty years after 1570. Many were prosperous farmers who had once been 'content with the traditional title of "yeoman"' but were now 'eager to be called gentry'.[380] Members of the upper clergy were another significant group that began styling themselves gentlemen. Other claimants had been enriched by their engagement in the Newcastle coal trade. Evidence for these new gentry households in the Durham region can be seen in herald visitations which formally recognised claims to gentility: the fifty-six families with recorded pedigrees and coats of arms in 1575 had almost doubled by 1615.[381]

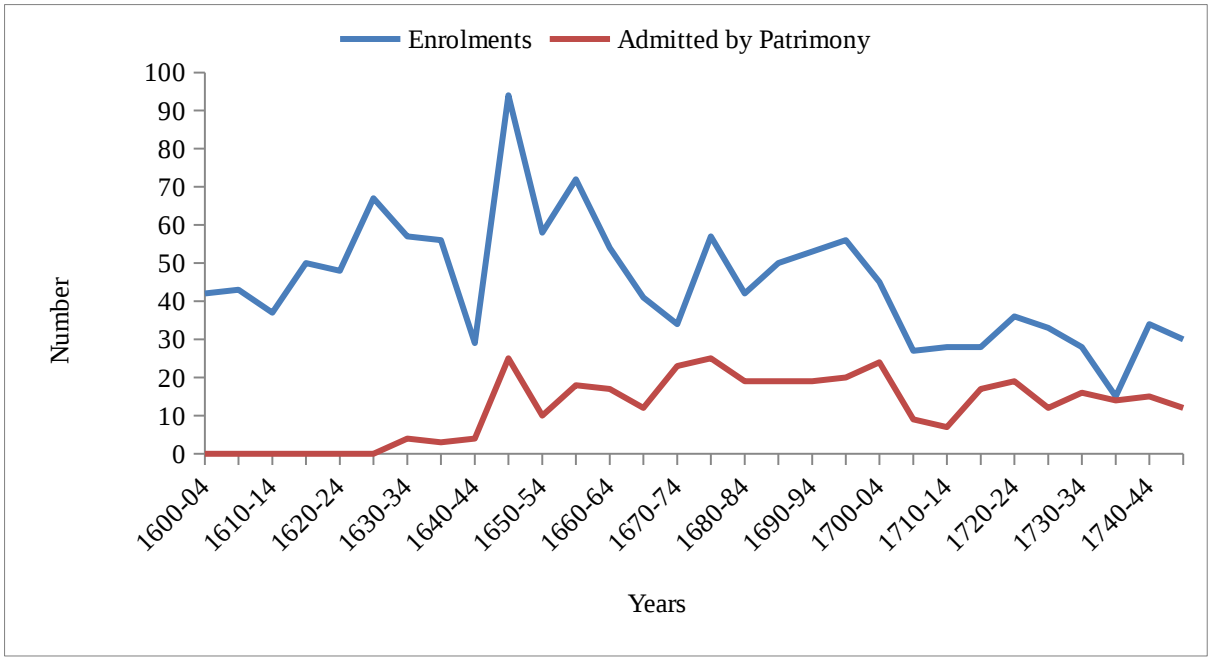
So whilst more gentlemen were apprenticing their sons in the seventeenth century, we must keep in mind that the term was not applied consistently at this time. As John Selden commented in 1689, 'What a Gentleman is …'tis hard with us to define'.[382] In the following discussion the term gentlemen is taken to represent a fairly broad social group. Some had landed estates though most did not. Many were successful in their trade or profession which accorded them a decent living, which in terms of wealth put them on par with the landed gentry. The status and power this provided offered some positions of authority within the 'self-perpetuating oligarchies' which controlled the towns and cities of England—the subject of Chapter Six.[383] It will additionally be argued that the widening of the term gentleman can be positively linked to the formation of the genteel bourgeoisie.

3.2 Enrolments to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers 1600-1750

The first point to consider is how the number of apprentices enrolling to serve their time with the Merchant Adventurers altered in the period 1600-1750. The proceedings of the company court include the names of youths enrolled as apprentices and this data is displayed in Figure 3.1.[384]

Figure 3.1: Apprentice enrolments and admittances by patrimony, 1600-1750.

379 Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), 228.
380 Mervyn James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics, and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500-1640* (Oxford, 1974), 69-72.
381 Ibid., 71-72.
382 John Selden, *Table Talk: Being the Discourses of John Selden Esq.* (London, 1689), 21.
383 Wrightson, *English Society*, 28-30.
384 The data used relates to 1,707 cases. In total 1,754 individuals were either enrolled or admitted by patrimony between 1600 and 1749, but some records are incomplete and for this reason have been omitted. Dendy lists the names given in the company court records and this provides the raw data.



Source: Compiled from data in F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts from the Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Surtees Society vol. 101 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1899), 225-368.

Overall the picture is one of decline, though considerable fluctuations occurred, particularly during the seventeenth century. The start of the eighteenth century marks the point when enrolments began to fall most consistently, and whereas from 1600 to 1649 around fifty-two apprentices were enrolled every five years, in the years 1700-1749, this figure had fallen to thirty. Prior to 1700, enrolments only dipped below the 1600-4 level in three sub-periods (1610-14, 1640-44 and 1670-4) and in each case was short-lived as numbers soon recovered. The greatest disruption to enrolments occurred in the twenty year period between 1635 and 1655, most likely connected to the outbreak of plague followed by the Civil War. Plague struck Newcastle in 1636 and claimed around 5,600 lives—almost half the population—in what may have been 'the most devastating cull experienced by any English city' of the period.[385] Although the crisis produced a 'sharp but temporary slump rather than a total stoppage' in maritime trade, the fall in population would have disrupted enrolments, not just with respect to local recruits but by reducing the number of potential masters.[386] The most pronounced drop in numbers occurred following the outbreak of Civil War. Whilst twenty-five apprentices were enrolled between 1640 and 1642, only four enrolled in 1643 and 1644 combined. In Bristol there was a similar fall in recruitment in the years 1643-5, with around 100 fewer enrolments than the previous year. So too in Norwich and Sheffield as the army

385 Keith Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer: A Scrivener, his City and the Plague* (New Haven and London, 2011), 38.
386 Ibid., 44.

siphoned off potential apprentices while others were put off entering trade during a period of national crisis.[387] The Civil War doubtless affected patterns of recruitment in Newcastle and the jump in enrolments seen in the late 1640s ties in with the end of the first phase of the conflict.[388] Despite such resurgences, enrolments to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers suffered an overall decline in numbers, only emphasised when demographic trends are taken into consideration. The population of Newcastle nearly doubled between the 1660s and 1750s, rising from 16,000 to around 29,000, an increase all the more remarkable considering the population of England stagnated between 1650 and 1700 and rose modestly after 1730.[389] Admissions to the company clearly failed to keep pace with the rapidly expanding population of the town. To understand why, we need to look at how attitudes to apprenticeship and guild control were changing on a national level.

Dunlop and Denman suggest that apprenticeship suffered a 'temporary collapse' during the Civil War and whilst successive governments did not object to the guilds resuming their chief activity of enforcing apprenticeship after the conflict, opposition to restricting 'a man's industrial freedom was undoubtedly growing.'[390] The disruptions of the mid-seventeenth century had made it easier to practise trades to which one had not been apprenticed, and guilds, 'on resuming their activities', were faced with 'a heavy task' re-enforcing observance. Adding to their difficulties was the 'very real distress among the industrial population owing to the overstocking of various trades', a problem exacerbated by discharged soldiers seeking to earn a living in industry. Many guilds resorted to reinforcing by-laws dealing with apprenticeship, such as the stipulation that no man may work or trade as a journeyman without first completing a seven-year apprenticeship.[391] A further reason why enrolments were declining was the fact that people were circumventing apprenticeship altogether on their way into skilled employment.[392] This trend was a symptom of mounting opposition to apprenticeship which caused many to question whether it was necessary at all. As the merchant and politician Josiah Child asked in 1694, 'what do we get by our seven

387 Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*, 102-103; Shedd, 'State Versus the Trades Guilds'.

388 Steven R. Smith, 'The Apprentices' Parliament of 1647', *History Today*, 22, 8 (1972), 576-582. Smith argues here that many London apprentices were attracted by the 'idealism of Puritanism and the Parliamentary cause, or by a sense of adventure, or to escape the often harsh life of apprenticeship.'

389 Joyce Ellis, 'A Dynamic Society: Social Relations in Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1660-1760', in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1984), 194; E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), 532-523. The population of England was 5.2 million in 1650 and 5.7 million a century later.

390 Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship,* 107.

391 Ibid., 107-110.

392 This was also the case in Leeds, where entry into the merchant ranks was usually by apprenticeship but not always. Wilson, *Gentleman Merchants*, 28 argues that 'That it was possible to move into the lower end of the trade, the indistinct area between small merchant, shopkeeper, clothier and cloth-dresser was proved time and time again especially as the eighteenth century advanced'.

Years Service, and the great Sums of money our Parents gave to bind us Apprentice to Merchants … who will hereafter bind his son to a Merchant?'[393] Child belonged to an expanding group of people who argued in favour of removing restraints on trade and industry.[394] From the 1660s they saw some success as English guilds and companies began to lose the fight against non-apprenticed interlopers as the central government became unwilling to side with them. Non-observance of the Statute of Artificers was the 'first step in the breakdown of the apprenticeship system' and public sympathy was with the offenders. So too was legal opinion, which gradually became antagonistic to the statute, citing free trade as a natural and common law right.[395]

Falling enrolments to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers doubtless reflects this broader reassessment of apprenticeship, though this was not the only reason. The company tried to reduce enrolments when it feared members were taking on too many apprentices for whom there was insufficient trade. As with guilds in general, the Merchant Adventurers used apprenticeship as a regulatory valve to control the number of people joining their ranks in order to preserve their monopoly and prevent excessive competition.[396] One way this was done was to limit the number of apprentices a master could have at any one time. An example can be taken from 1675 when the company ordered that no member was allowed to take a second apprentice until his first had served three years and no third until the second had served five years. No other apprentices were to be taken until the latter was five years into his term. Furthermore, a member was only to have one apprentice in the seven years following his admission to the company. Between seven and twenty years he was allowed two apprentices and only after this time had elapsed could he take three.[397] To further limit numbers, in 1682 the company clamped down on apprentices petitioning to finish their term early. '[I]f not prevented', they argued, '[it] may give great incouradgment to careless Apprentices to purchase theire Libertys and great discouradgment to those that make true and faithfull service.' No petition was to be heard until 'they have duely and truly served nine yeares.'[398] It is notable that the company stipulated its apprentices had to serve nine years before they could be admitted to their freedom. As we have seen, the Statute of Artificers

393 Josiah Child, *A Discourse of Trade* (London, 1694), 108.

394 Grassby, *Business Community*, 194; Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, 1978), 113-114.

395 Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*, 107-118, 124-132. In two notable cases from 1698 and 1708 it was deemed sufficient for a person to be regarded as a lawful practitioner of their chosen trade after following it for seven years without any formal binding or apprenticeship. Such rulings naturally made companies wary or persecuting offenders.

396 Ibid., 198.

397 T&WA, GU/MA/4, f. 65.

398 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 100.

stipulated that the minimum period of service was seven years and this emerged as typical in a range of trades. Aside from reducing the intake of merchants, the company stood to gain little from insisting on these longer terms.

One final point to make with regards Figure 3.1 is that it relates to enrolments rather than admissions. Enrolments provide the key data for counting the number of apprenticeships set up each year; what they do not tell us is how many apprentices completed their service and admitted as freemen of Newcastle. Failing to complete an apprenticeship was relatively common. 'Of all the Youths that yearly come up to *London*, to be Apprentices to *Merchants*', remarked Thomas Tryon in 1695, 'there is not one in twenty that serves his time out.'[399] Provincial towns also had high rates of non-completion. In seventeenth-century Bristol only 30 percent of apprenticeships ran their course.[400] Chester and Coventry had completion rates in the region of 50 percent in the early Stuart period, which are representative of other estimates that state between a third and half of apprenticeships ended prematurely.[401] This was broadly true for the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers where 56 percent of individuals enrolled as apprentices went on to be admitted as freemen in the period 1660-1750.[402]

Apprentices failed to take up their freedom for a number of reasons. For one thing mortality claimed around 10 percent of apprentices before they had time to finish training.[403] Then there was the tendency for time-served apprentices to migrate from the town in which they trained in search of better prospects.[404] Field adds another reason when he argues that it did not make 'financial sense' for apprentices to finish their time as they only received training in the first half of their term; the remainder was an unprofitable period where the apprentice 'repaid' their master by working for free.[405] Were this the case then there must indeed have been a temptation to leave halfway through, though it is difficult to see why anyone would became a master if this was common practice. Furthermore, Wallis claims that training and work proceeded in parallel rather than in isolation, meaning both apprentice and master alike stood to lose if training was not completed.[406] For Ben-Amos the reason many

399Thomas Tryon, *A New Method of Educating Children*, (London, 1695), 83-84. For confirmation of Thomas's estimate see Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge, 1989), 397-398, Table A2.2.

400 Patrick Wallis, 'Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern England', *The Journal of Economic History*, 68, 3 (2008), 839, Table 1.

401 Grassby, *Business Community*, 139-140; Brooks, 'Apprenticeship', 74.

402 Between 1660 and 1750 there were 691 enrolments and 389 admissions. For the same period there were 315 admissions via patrimony. Calculated from the dataset of Figure 3.1.

403 Wallis, 'Apprenticeship', 138-139.

404 Ibid.

405 Jacob F. Field, 'Apprenticeship Migration to London from the North-East of England in the Seventeenth Century', *The London Journal*, 35, 1 (2010), 14-15.

406 Wallis, 'Apprenticeship', 849-850. This seems more plausible than Field's argument and better describes Ralph Jackson's experience as a Newcastle merchant apprentice discussed in Chapter Two above.

apprentices left was simply due to boredom and disillusionment at the slow pace of advancement.[407] But given families had often invested considerable sums of money to have their sons apprenticed to Newcastle merchants, the idea that such a large proportion simply walked away due to boredom or disillusionment seems unconvincing. A severed apprenticeship could all too easily devolve into a life of unsettled drifting from job to job, even vagrancy, which would have encouraged the disillusioned to either stick out their term or ensure they had an alternative arrangement before they quit.[408] So whilst some apprentices became sufficiently disillusioned to abandon their training or master, overall the failure to become a freeman was probably more commonly down to the individual moving away from the town, either to return home or to take up a more promising opening elsewhere.[409]

3.3 The social origins of apprentice Merchant Adventurers

Together with the gradual decline in the number of apprentices enrolled with the Merchant Adventurers, one of the most striking changes in recruitment is the infiltration of the gentry, much to the cost of those further down the social scale. As the Merchant Adventurer court records give the occupation of the apprentice's father, measuring this quantitatively is fairly straightforward. Complications arise when we recall the status inflation of the seventeenth century and the increased flexibility of the term 'gentleman'. Stone and Stone argue that the majority of apprentices whose fathers are listed as 'gentlemen' were actually 'pseudo-gentry', Alan Everitt's class of leisured and mainly urban families whose way of life was such that they were regarded as gentry despite not being supported by a landed estate. They could include younger sons of the gentry, members of the clergy, army officers, lawyers, scriveners, doctors, heirs to merchants and the like.[410] For these reasons Stone and Stone argue apprenticeship statistics by social origin are 'almost useless' unless such individuals can be weeded out.[411] It does indeed seem unlikely that many apprentice merchants in Newcastle hailed from the landed gentry. But there is little reason to doubt the reliability of the information entered by municipal officials in the presence of masters, fathers, company

407 Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Failure to Become Freemen: Urban Apprentices in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 16, 2 (1991), 165-170; Peter Clark and David Souden, introduction to *Migration and Society in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Clark and David Souden, (London, 1987), 31.

408 Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London, 2006), 18-19.

409 See Chapter Two above.

410 Alan Everitt, 'Social Mobility in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 33 (1966), 70-71; Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone. *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), 234.

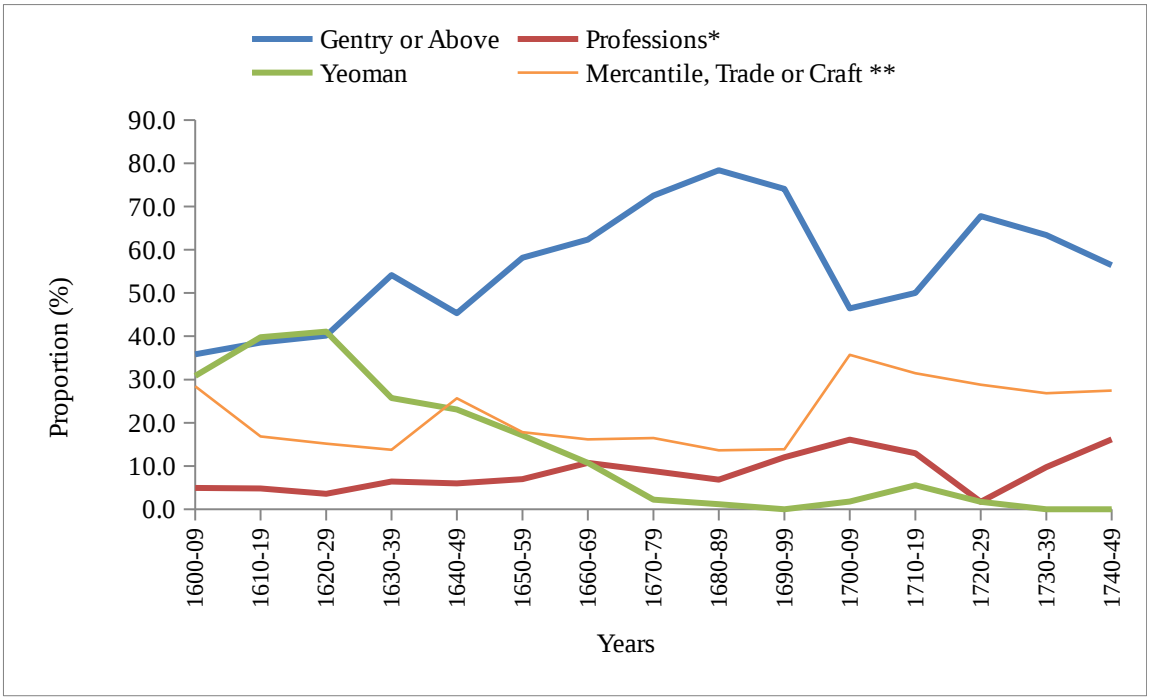
411 Stone and Stone, *Open Elite?*, 234.

wardens and other witnesses. Under these circumstances 'it would have been difficult for a labourer's son to have claimed that he had noble blood flowing through his veins'.[412] Grassby, while accepting the 'ubiquitous description "Gent." was a vague and elastic term employed indiscriminately in formal documents', similarly points out that the clerks responsible for compiling the lists would not have accepted 'spurious claims by individuals.'[413]

Countering this negative reason why more people were styling themselves gentlemen, the broadening of the term can be related positively to the creation of a genteel urban bourgeoisie. Importantly, the urban bourgeoisie had their own approach to urban life (discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five) and in this sense did not constitute a 'pseudo-gentry', rather a section of the urban population that styled themselves 'gent' on account of their 'bourgeois dignity'.[414] This interpretation of the term 'gentleman' means the data displayed below in Figure 3.2 points to a very significant transformation in the social composition of merchant apprentices, certainly more so than would be the case if all we were seeing was the result of loosely applied terminology.[415] Once again it needs to be noted that the data records enrolments to the company rather than admissions. Furthermore, as entries gained by patrimony are not included the proportion of youths joining the company whose fathers were merchants is underrepresented. The justification for omitting this information is that the data is intended to show how the social origins of youths formally enrolled as apprentices to the Merchant Adventurers changed over time. As those admitted via patrimony were not required to serve an apprenticeship beforehand, rather than including them here they were represented earlier in Figure 3.1. This is not to overlook their significance. Were the number of youths who came to the company by patrimony added to the data displayed in Figure 3.2 the size of the 'Mercantile, Trade or Craft' category would notably increase. But to reiterate, as these additions to the date were not formally enrolled to the company, their inclusion would distort the overall picture.

Figure 3.2: Social statuses of the fathers of 1,283 apprentices enrolled to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers, 1600-1749

412 Rappaport, *Worlds*, 25.
413 Grassby, *Business Community*, 141-144.
414 Deidre McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (Chicago, 2010), 402-403.
415 The entire dataset contains 1,754 entries. Of these, 1,362 are apprentice enrolments (as opposed to admittance via patrimony), but seventy-nine are missing data relating to either the social status of the apprentice's father or the date of enrolment.



* Incudes apothecaries, academics, surgeons, members of the clergy, clerks
** Includes merchants, bakers and brewers, butchers, carpenters, clothiers, cordwainers, fullers and dyers, glassmakers, haberdashers, mercers, master mariners etc.
Source: Figure 3.1 dataset

The lack of need to include a status group below yeomen is the first point to mention; this indicates that by 1600 apprentices were already drawn from the upper ranks of society. Husbandmen are noticeably absent, though the term was not widely used in Northumberland and Durham records from the late sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. The suggestion is that the designation 'husbandman' was conflated with 'yeoman', which may be the case in the records used here.[416] Regardless, there is a strong pattern for the gentry to dominate enrolments after the 1620s. Prior to the 1620s, apprentices were drawn from a broader social base, with yeoman, gentlemen or those involved in trade or manufacturing roughly equally likely to apprentice sons to Newcastle merchants in 1600. Indeed until the 1630s the proportion of apprentices describing their fathers as gentlemen rose in tandem with those listing them as yeomen. Thereafter this pattern changes markedly, with the number of apprentices coming from yeoman stock consistently falling to the point where scarcely any were apprenticed by the 1670s. Indeed, whereas 31.6 percent of apprentices were sons of yeoman in the years 1600-1649, between 1650 and 1699 this proportion had fallen to just 6.8 percent. With respect to the mercantile, trade or craft group, the 1640s saw a slight increase in numbers but this was not sustained. Another spike occurred at the beginning of the

416 R. A. Houston, 'The Development of Literacy: Northern England, 1640-1750', *EcHR*, 35, 2 (1982), 205.

eighteenth century and this ushered in a period of higher numbers. But the ascendancy of the gentleman is unmistakable and the seventeenth century emerges as a key stage in their domination, with 80 percent of apprentices having fathers listed as gentleman or above by the 1690s. Even the drop in numbers seen in the early decades of the eighteenth century did not seriously challenge their supremacy.

So how is this transformation explained? Over the course of the seventeenth century prosperous yeomen were more commonly styling themselves as gentlemen and this unquestionably contributes to the gradual disappearance of the term, but there is clearly more to the statistics than this. As mentioned earlier, the drop in the proportion of yeoman fathers apprenticing their sons to Newcastle merchants probably reflects the rising cost of apprenticeship. Acknowledging this, in 1688 the company noted the 'considerable Sumes of Money' paid by 'persons of Quality and Gentry of these Northerne Countys … [to] put theire sons App^{en}tices' in their ranks.[417] Only reasonably wealthy households could afford the £120 paid by Joseph Forster to have his son Francis apprenticed to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurer John Kelly in the 1740s.[418] The gentry were ideally positioned to absorb such costs and with access to credit were also capable of providing the capital needed to set sons up as merchants once training was over. The cost of doing so was considerable. Getting established in foreign trade required an outlay of around £500 in the 1650s, rising to over £1,000 thereafter. Entering the domestic trade was less expensive; typically £200-£300 was needed to begin as a coastal trader in the provinces.[419] Coupled with rising apprentice premiums, these sums were beyond what many families could afford and acted as a barrier to the less affluent. Furthermore, as more and more gentlemen sought apprenticeships for their sons with Merchant Adventurers, this raised the profile of the company and incentivised others of a similar social standing to follow suit. At the same time this closed the door to yeomen and husbandmen.

To judge how typical this scenario was, it will be helpful to compare Newcastle with Bristol. Table 3.1 gives the proportion of merchant apprentices whose fathers are listed as gentlemen, merchants, yeomen or husbandmen for each town. Compared to Bristol, a greater change took place in the Newcastle merchant community. The lingering presence of husbandmen is a notable variation in the Bristol data as none are listed as apprenticing their sons to Newcastle Merchant Adventurers after 1600, though as mentioned earlier this may be

417 T&WA, GU MA/2/1, f. 156-f.157.
418 Dendy, *Records of the Merchant Adventurers*, vol. 101, 358.
419 Grassby, *Business Community*, 82-87.

partly explained by the term 'husbandman' not being in common usage in Northumberland during this period.

Table 3.1 Social statuses of the fathers of merchant apprentices in Bristol and Newcastle in the years 1600-90

Father's status	1600-1630		1670-1690	
	Bristol (%)	Newcastle (%)	Bristol (%)	Newcastle (%)
Gentleman	23.3	38.4	22.1	74.9
Yeoman	9.8	37.7	7.1	1.0
Merchant	18.6	19.6	25.2	14.6
Husbandman	6.4	—	2.2	—
Other/not given	41.9	4.3	43.4	9.4
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**99.9***

*Not 100% due to rounding
Sources: Patrick McGrath, ed. *Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth-Century Bristol*, Bristol Record Society, vol. 19 (1955), 276-277; Figure 3.1 dataset.

Fathers listed as yeomen all but disappear from Newcastle after 1670 but remain significant in Bristol up to 1690. Yet the most striking contrast is with the proportion of gentlemen apprenticing their sons to merchants. Around 38 percent of apprentices gave their father's status as 'gentleman' in Newcastle between 1600 and 1630, rising to 74.9 percent for the years 1670-90. No such change took place in Bristol and the proportion of gentlemen apprenticing their sons to merchants remained fairly consistent. That a larger proportion of Newcastle merchant apprentices were sons of gentlemen than was the case in Bristol tells us that each town had a different relationship with its hinterland. Throughout much of the seventeenth century Newcastle was the dominant urban centre in the region and represented the best option for a gentleman seeking to train, or indeed establish, his son as a merchant in the region. The fact that a smaller proportion of Bristol apprentices came from the gentry probably reflects the wider range of options open to them, with London in particular enticing many potential recruits.[420]

3.4 The cultural impact of the gentleman merchant

420 Imagining a line drawn from The Wash to the Isle of Wight, just 1.6 percent of the 603 youths that came to be apprenticed to Bristol merchants originated east of this boundary.

The gentry did not have a traditional association with apprenticeship. As this began to change in the seventeenth century, so began an 'anxious controversy' over whether or not apprenticeship jeopardised social status.[421] The point of discussing this debate here is to demonstrate how the merchant community in Newcastle was involved in wider cultural change in a way that had a bearing on the development of town.

As the key trade centre in the northeast region with an increasingly gentry-dominated body of merchants, Newcastle was involved in the reworking of the old notion that trade and apprenticeship were incompatible with gentility. The crux of the argument was expressed by Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577), a scholar, political theorist and diplomat, who regarded apprenticeship as a 'kinde of servitude or bondage' that lumbered the youth with 'all servile offices about the house' and required him to 'be obedient to all his masters commaundementes' and suffer whatever correction 'his master shall thinke meete.'[422] This was Poyntz's experience and one that led him to conclude that 'To bee bound an Apprentice that life I deemed little better then a dogs life and base.'[423] Not all agreed. In *The Cities Advocate* (1629) Edmund Bolton addressed the question of whether apprenticeship derogated status and sought to oppose the 'most prowd, pernicious, dull, and unlearned paradox, That Apprenticeship extinguisheth Gentrie.'[424] Bolton was out to challenge the likes of Sir Thomas Smith who 'injuriously defined' apprenticeship as a 'kind of Bondmen, (meaning meer Slaves) that 'extinguisheth Gentry'.[425] Bolton countered this argument by pointing out that apprenticeship was actually 'a meer Civil Contract, of which, as all the world knows, a Bondsman uncapable.' Apprentices may appear 'conditional servants', but in truth they were not 'bound to do or suffer things more grevious, than young Souldiers in Armies, or Scholars in rigorous Schools'.[426] Regarding the apprentice premium payable to bind apprentice to master, he observed that 'Apprentices now come commonly like Wives, with treble more portions than formerly to their Masters. If then Apprenticeship be a kind of *servitude*, it is either a pleasing Bondage, or a strange madness to purchase it with so much money.'[427]

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421 Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost—Further Explained*, 3rd ed. (London, 1983), 48; Carl Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen 1590-1642* (Oxford, 1968), 173.

422 Ian W. Archer, 'Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577), Scholar, Diplomat and Political Theorist', *ODNB*; Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (London, 1584), 113.

423 A. T. S. Goodrick, ed. *The Relation of Sydnam Poyntz 1624-1634*, Camden Third Series, vol. 14 (1908), 45.

424 The letter from Edmund Bolton to Sir William Segar (Ashmolean MS. 837, ff. 228-9) is reproduced in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, no. 102, June 1832, 499-501. Segar was a herald and Bolton's work is sometimes mistakenly attributed to him. See: Anthony Adolph, 'Seger, Sir William (*b*. in or before 1564, *d*. 1633), Herald', *ODNB*.

425 Edmund Bolton, *The Cities Great Concern, in this Case or Question of Honour and Arms, Whether Apprenticeship Extinguisheth Gentry?* (London, 1674), 12.

426 Ibid., 8-9, 16.

427 Ibid., 48.

In revisiting debates of this nature we must always question how far they engaged the general public. Were gentlemen really concerned that apprenticing their sons would jeopardise their social status? It seems that the likes of Thomas Smith were in the minority, as gentlemen were generally attracted to any sector of the economy that could support an independent business, particularly the professions.[428] Holmes estimates that between 1680 and 1730 the number of permanent professional jobs in England increased by 70 percent to reach 55,000 as the economy grew and became more complex. Economic expansion created new services and landed society provided many of the young men needed in the professions.[429] However, according to Grassby, the number of openings in the professions each year failed to meet demand, unlike business, which offered 'indispensable openings and opportunities for growth.'[430] The result was an influx of gentlemen into the business community that was only added to by the tendency for the landed sector to favour primogeniture in the seventeenth century. With no legacy for their younger sons parents had 'no choice' but to apprentice them.[431] The merchant Josiah Child highlighted this when he praised the Dutch law of *Gavel-kind* which determined that each child received an equal share of their father's estate upon his death 'so [they] are not left to wrestle with the world in their youth, with inconsiderable assistance of Fortune, as most of our youngest Sons of Gentlemen in *England* are, who are bound Apprentices to Merchants'.[432]

When it came to entering the world of commerce, large-scale merchandising was particularly appealing to gentlemen, as was foreign trade. Others concentrated on coastal domestic trade; some entered the textile industry. Although many preferred wholesaling, a good deal were engaged in retailing and sold directly to the customer. Basic handicrafts offered the least appeal and most sons of gentlemen or prosperous merchants were deterred by the marginal status of the sector.[433] Essentially there was a hierarchy of occupations for gentlemen and a limit to the tasks they could perform without 'losing face', although it was often the lower incomes as much as social prejudice that discouraged them from entering minor trades.[434] Prestigious trading companies like the Newcastle Merchant Adventurer were most attractive and it is notable that as more gentlemen joined this company, amongst the lesser trades the social origins of members remained fairly consistent from 1660 to 1760.

428 Laslett, *World We Have Lost*, 303 n. 22.
429 Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society, 1680-1730* (London, 1982), 12-16.
430 Grassby, *Business Community*, 132-135.
431 Ibid., 125, 112.
432 Child, *Discourse of Trade*, 2.
433 Grassby, *Business Community*, 160-165.
434 Ibid., 118-119.

Gentlemen looking for openings for their sons showed little interest in the Newcastle Joiners Company for instance, which was classified as a bye-trade. Company records show that of 293 apprentices enrolled between 1647 and 1750, over two thirds had fathers described as yeomen; only fourteen were listed as gentlemen, one a merchant and one a Hostman.[435]

An important consequence of more gentlemen entering trade was the fostering of close familial ties between themselves and leading merchants. Over time commerce and gentility became more compatible, a point emphasised by Defoe.[436] Defoe was a tireless promoter of the middle classes, the merchants and tradesmen whom he regarded as the backbone of national prosperity. He was particularly keen on challenging the lingering hostility the gentry and nobility held towards commerce.[437] As he observed, 'many of our noble and wealthy families are rais'd by, and derive from trade, so it is true, and indeed it cannot be otherwise, that many of the younger branches of our gentry, and even of the nobility itself, have descended again into the spring from whence they flow'd, and have become tradesmen.'[438] In part his *Complete Tradesman* can be read as an advice manual on how rich tradesmen could make the transition to gentility.[439] Newcastle commerce certainly enriched many of the region's leading families, Sir William Blackett, first baronet (1621-1680) a prominent example. William's father came from the chapelry of Hamsterley to the west of Bishop Auckland in County Durham. Socially he was on the borderline between yeoman and gentry status, but through trade and business he rose to be part of the town elite, purchasing Grey Friars mansion in 1675.[440] Described by Bourne in 1736 as a 'Princely House', it was an emblem of success.[441] The Carrs and the Ellisons similarly amassed great wealth through trade and became synonymous with the merchant elite in Newcastle. Politically, economically and socially, these families would dominate Newcastle well into the eighteenth century and their success proved to others that a life in trade was no barrier to gentility.[442]

Defoe was part of a broader reworking of the concept of gentility that stretched back to the late sixteenth century.[443] Whereas gentility had long been connected to family lineage

435 Rebecca Frances King, 'Aspects of Sociability in the North East of England 1600-1750', Durham University PhD thesis (2001), 38.
436 Wrightson, *English Society*, 28.
437 Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman, in Familiar Letters* (Dublin, 1726), Letter XXII.
438 Ibid., 241.
439 Michael Shinagel, *Daniel Defoe and Middle Class Gentility* (Cambridge, 1968), Ch. 10 and Ch. 11, esp. 209-211.
440 Mark Blackett-Ord, 'Blackett, Sir William, First Baronet (1621-1680), Merchant and Mine Owner', *ODNB*; A. W. Purdue, *The Ship That Came Home: The Story of a Northern Dynasty* (London, 2001), 17.
441 Henry Bourne, *The History of Newcastle upon Tyne* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1736), 85.
442 The political role of these families is discussed in Chapter Six.
443 Wrightson, *English Society*, 20.

and ‘good blood’, from the late seventeenth century it became an ‘urbane and cultivated ideal’ that was learnt and asserted through codes of behaviour that set the parameters of polite taste.[444] Richard Steele summed up this position in 1713 when he wrote of ‘the Vanity of a Man’s valuing himself upon his Ancestors’ and argued that ‘Nobility consists in Virtue, not in Birth.’[445] He also argued that ‘those who have raised either the Interest or Reputation of their Country’ through their labours ought to be held in gratitude to honour their posterity.[446] Such comments sought to promote industriousness as a quality for the national good, which frequently involved juxtaposing the merchant with the landed gentleman. For example, in a 1711 essay published in *The Spectator*, members of the fictitious Spectator Club included Sir Roger, an affable landed gentleman ‘cheerful, gay, and hearty’ who kept a ‘good House both in Town and Country’ and was a ‘great Lover of Mankind.’ But with ‘such a mirthful Cast in his Behaviour’ he was ‘beloved rather than esteemed.’ Then there was Sir Andrew, a merchant ‘of great Eminence in the City of *London*’ and a person of ‘indefatigable Industry’, with ‘strong Reason, and great Experience. His Notions of Trade are noble and generous.’ He proved diligence provided a greater legacy than valour and that ‘Sloth has ruin’d more Nations than the Sword.’[447] Such characterisations both reflected and reinforced changing perceptions of the merchant community as gentility and trade ceased to be seen as incompatible.[448]

These efforts were accompanied by a general reappraisal of the importance of trade and its practitioners. The early seventeenth century was the point when ‘a capitalist’s positive self-perception emerged’ and as the ‘value of the merchant to the state’ continued to be discussed, their reputation gained ground, as demonstrated by Augustan literature which increasingly portrayed merchants in a better light.[449] The burgeoning art of political economy

444 Corfield, ‘The Rivals’, 15-16; Adrian Green, ‘“A Clumsey Countrey Girl”: The Material and Print Culture of Betty Bowes’, in *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*, eds. Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot, 2004), 72.

445 *The Guardian* no. 137 Aug. 18, 1713 in *The Guardian*, vol. 2 (London, 1714). Steele was an Irishman, born into the Protestant gentry. He edited various periodicals, including *The Spectator, The Tatler* and *The Guardian* (which began in 1713). See Calhoun Winton, ‘Steele, Richard (*bap*. 1672, *d*. 1729), Writer and Politician’, *ODNB*.

446 *The Guardian* no. 137 Aug. 18, 1713.

447 *The Spectator* no. 2 Mar. 2, 1711. Sir Roger de Coverley and Sir Andrew Freeport were products of Joseph Addison’s imagination and used in *The Spectator* to characterise the typical landed gentleman and moneyed merchant. See N. S. B. Gras, ‘Sir Andrew Freeport, a Merchant of London’, *Business Historical Society, Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, 19 (1945), 159-162.

448 Corfield, ‘The Rivals’, 15-16.

449 Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan introduction to *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, eds. Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan (New York, 2008), 11; Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: the Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001), 1, 10-13, 157-158.

further supported the argument that trade was essential for national prosperity.[450] McCloskey has additionally claimed that the reappraisal of business was such that the positive mentality it engendered made the industrial revolution possible. First in Holland, then in England, bourgeois behaviour was subjected to a revaluation and 'the idea of progress through bourgeois dignity and liberty took hold on the social imaginary of the West.'[451] The key point to note is that the growing tendency for gentlemen to apprentice their sons to Newcastle merchants was occurring at a time when the reputation of trade was improving. Each trend was supportive of the other: as more members of the gentry entered trade this raised its profile which encouraged others to follow. Being a provincial town did not exclude Newcastle from participating in the cultural reworking of trade and gentility that was taking place on a national level.

3.5 Changing patterns of recruitment: the decline of long-distance migration

Migration was a fact of life in early modern England that had a significant impact on communities. Adding to, or subtracting from, a population determined its character and affected all people regardless of whether or not they were the ones moving.[452] Population movement was also a crucial factor in social and economic change that reduced pressure on rural areas by syphoning off excess numbers and offsetting high mortality rates in towns. One estimate has it that towns absorbed around 40 percent of the natural population growth in England during the seventeenth century which gives some idea of the importance of migration. [453] In pre-industrial society most migrants were between fifteen and twenty-four years old, and as the vast majority of apprentices were within this age range when they commenced their training, in this sense they were typical migrants.[454] Apprentices were, however, distinguished from many migrants as they were largely drawn from the lower to

450 Paul Slack, 'The Politics of Consumption and England's Happiness in the Later Seventeenth Century', *EHR*, 122, 497 (2007), 609-631; Paul Slack 'Material Progress and the Challenge of Affluence in Seventeenth-Century England', *EcHR*, 62, 3 (2009), 576-603.

451 McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity*, 25.

452 Ian Whyte, *Migration and Society 1550-1830* (Basingstoke, 2000), 1; Peter Clark, 'The Migrant in Kentish towns 1580-1640', in *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700: Essays in Urban History*, eds. Peter Clark and Paul Slack (London, 1972), 117-163.

453 Whyte, *Migration*, 63.

454 M. J. Kitch, 'Capital and Kingdom: Migration to Later Stuart London', in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*, eds. A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay (Harlow, 1986), 225.

middling sections of society (and above as time went on), differing considerable from the countless vagrants, poor migrants and servants that moved around the country.[455]

While patterns of urban migration varied considerably with time and place, as a rule long-distance migration became less common throughout England from the 1640s onwards.[456]

More so than anywhere, London continued to attract long-distance migrants but comparing the periods 1551-53 and 1711-13 we see that the average distance apprentices travelled fell from 115 to sixty miles; between the same dates the proportion of migrants coming from within ninety miles of the capital rose from 54 percent to 77 percent.[457] To assess how far the migration patterns for apprentice Merchant Adventurers changed in Newcastle, Table 3.2 provides the geographical origins of 1,073 individuals enrolled to the company between 1600 and 1749.[458]

Table 3.2: Migration pattern of apprentice Newcastle Merchant Adventurers 1600-1749

Years	<10 miles	10-19 miles	0-19 miles	20-39 miles	40-59 miles	60-79 miles	80-99 miles	100-149 miles	150+ miles	Total
1600-24 (%)	37.7	16.0	53.7	24.7	4.3	9.3	4.9	1.2	1.9	100.0
1625-49 (%)	31.6	14.0	45.6	17.5	12.3	16.7	3.9	1.8	2.2	100.0
1650-74 (%)	38.9	13.0	51.9	13.0	15.4	12.5	4.8	1.0	1.4	100.0 100.2
1675-99 (%)	46.6	12.8	59.4	22.4	8.7	6.4	2.3	0.5	0.5	*
1700-24 (%)	57.0	12.6	69.6	17.0	3.7	5.9	1.5	0.7	1.5	99.9*
1725-49 (%)	58.7	15.7	74.4	15.7	5.0	0.8	4.1	0	0	100.0

*Not 100.0% due to rounding
Source: Figure 3.1 dataset

Throughout the period most merchant apprentices came from within twenty miles of Newcastle. Within each sub-period those migrating eighty miles or more were almost always in the minority. These trends became more pronounced over time, with long-distance

455 Ibid.
456 Whyte, *Migration*, 68-69.
457 Kitch, 'Capital', 30.
458 In total there are 1,362 recorded enrolments for the years 1600-1749. Unfortunately it has not been possible to include all these records and Table 3.1 represents the 1,073 cases suitable for inclusion. The most common reason for omission is that only a county is given without a town. Without this information no distance can be accurately calculated. Occasionally a place name is listed but it has not been possible to find this location in order to calculate distance. Other enrolments list a name and date without any location (not due simply to the individual being admitted by patrimony whereupon this information is normally left out). The missing entries do not share any characteristics which means the overall results should not be distorted to far by their omission.

migration declining in relation to local recruitment. The proportion of apprentices migrating less than ten miles increased most notably in the period 1650-1749, rising from 38.9 percent to 58.7 percent. Rising short-distance migration was mirrored by a marked decline in the proportion of youths migrating forty miles or more, which accounted for just 9.9 percent of all apprentices by the mid-eighteenth century, a clear contrast to 1650 when the proportion stood at 35.1 percent. That the company was recruiting more of its apprentices from Newcastle's population is confirmed by Table 3.3. This shows that, compared to 1600, by 1750 the proportion of apprentices whose fathers are listed as Newcastle residents doubled.

Table 3.3: Apprentices with fathers listed as Newcastle residents, 1600-1749

Years	Percentage of fathers listed as Newcastle residents	Years	Percentage of fathers listed as Newcastle residents
1600-24	15 (32)*	1675-99	27 (69)
1625-49	17 (50)	1700-24	31 (48)
1650-74	21 (54)	1725-49	31 (43)

*Bracketed figures give number
Source: Figure 3.1 dataset

Historians have given several reasons why patterns of long-distance migration contracted over time. Clark points out that England's stagnating population alleviated some of the pressures to migrate, and while many larger towns continued to suffer an excess of deaths over births, with fewer full-scale urban mortality crises after 1660 the requirement for urban centres to replenish large sections of their populations became less routine. Emigration overseas to the colonies also offered an alternative to seeking employment within England.[459] Above all, urbanisation increased the supply of local recruits and reduced the need for long-distance migration, as despite a stagnating national population, between 1650 and 1750 England's towns continued to grow, with the Newcastle population rising from 10,000 in 1600 to 12,000 seventy years later and 29,000 by 1750.[460] That the increase in local recruitment coincided with a boom in the town population is confirmed by Table 3.3. This is significant as it tells that after 1650 urbanisation meant fewer youths were migrating to Newcastle to serve as apprentice merchants.[461] Rural families once sending sons to Newcastle

459 Peter Clark, 'Migration in England in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *P&P*, 83 (1979), 82-90.
460 Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470-1750* (London, 2002), 235; Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven and London, 2009), 62.
461 It will be recalled that Newcastle's population doubled between the 1660s and 1750s, rising from 16,000 to around 29,000.

to be apprenticed might well be town dwellers themselves by the late seventeenth century. Local economic growth was another reason why long-distance migration declined.[462] In Bristol for example, economic expansion made settlement a more attractive proposition and the number of apprentices taking their freedom rose by half in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when the town entered its 'golden age' with the expansion of Atlantic trade.[463] Reversing the pattern, when York experienced commercial difficulties after 1700 it registered a decline in the number of merchant apprentices as potential recruits migrated to more prosperous towns such as Hull and Leeds.[464]

Fields has examined apprentice migration from the Newcastle and Durham region to London during the seventeenth century and similarly concludes that socio-economic change in the form of urbanisation and increased economic opportunities provided by the coal industry reduced the number of youths seeking apprenticeships in the capital.[465] Economic expansion in the northeast does not necessarily mean, however, that those remaining in the area sought apprenticeships or employment in Newcastle. During the long eighteenth century Newcastle found its growth outpaced by its immediate neighbours and this would have had an impact on the number of youths seeking apprenticeships with the Merchant Adventurers.[466] Table 3.4 shows the relative importance of the northern counties for providing the company with new recruits and Northumberland and Durham emerge as particularly important, with 71.4 percent of apprentices coming from these two counties alone. Nevertheless, with 26.9 percent of apprentices coming from counties other than Northumberland and Durham, the company drew a significant proportion of its recruits from outside the region, meaning urban growth in these areas would have had an impact on the number of apprentices received.[467]

Table 3.4: County origins of 1,315 apprentices enrolled to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers 1600-1749

County	Number of apprentices	Proportion of enrolments (%)

462 Kitch, 'Capital', 139-140.
463 Ben-Amos, 'Failure to Become Freemen', 161-162.
464 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 96.
465 Field, 'Apprentice Migration'.
466 John L. Walton, 'North' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2, *1540-1840*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge, 2000), 128; Joyce Ellis, 'The "Black Indies": Economic Development of Newcastle, c.1700-1840' in *Newcastle upon Tyne: A Modern History*, eds. Robert Colls and Bill Lancaster (Chichester, 2001), 1-26.
467 As an example, since the 1580s people had been migrating from Yorkshire to Newcastle in search of work, but as waterpower developed in Airedale and Calderdale in the eighteenth century, it 'helped to keep enterprising Yorkshiremen in their own locality.' See C. M. Fraser and Kenneth Emsley, 'Newcastle Merchant Adventurers from West Yorkshire', *AA*, 5th Series, 6 (1978), 117-129.

Northumberland	535	40.7
Durham	404	30.7
Yorkshire*	187	14.2
Cumberland	88	6.7
Westmorland	65	5.0
Lancashire	13	1.0
Other	23	1.7
Total	**1,315**	**100.0**

*Includes the North, East and West Ridings
Source: Figure 3.1 dataset

It was certainly the case that economic expansion was taking place in towns near to Newcastle. Gateshead is one example. Gateshead had easy access to coal and the Tyne and had long been a thorn in the side of Newcastle who regarded its neighbour as a 'deplorable zone of free trade' and exerted considerable influence over it by means of the Grand Lease. This provided the town with control of the manor of Gateshead but when this expired in 1682 Gateshead was able to establish itself on its own terms.[468] The population of North Shields rose nine-fold in the long eighteenth century while Tynemouth and South Shields acquired 'five-figure populations from tiny beginnings.' The Sunderland population rose twentyfold to 25,000 and steady growth in coal sales and shipping activities during the seventeenth century accompanied by a period of exceptional growth towards 1700 made this 'upstart neighbour' a fast-growing rival to Newcastle.[469] County Durham provided further competition when it 'rediscovered the dynamism it had lost in the post-Reformation century' while innovations in mining and transport enabled Stockton, Darlington, Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle to triple their populations from small beginnings.[470] Urban growth was in fact taking place throughout northern England. Liverpool acquired a role in all urban networks located in the

468 Peter Rushton, 'Gateshead 1550-1700: Independence Against all the Odds?', in *Newcastle and Gateshead Before 1700*, eds. Diana Newton and A. J. Pollard (Chichester 2009), 95-22.

469 Gillian Cookson, Christie Newman and Maureen Meikle, 'Growth, 1600-1800' in *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of the County of Durham,* vol. 5, *Sunderland*, ed. Gillian Cookson (Woodbridge, 2015), 73-74; Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, 'Parish, River, Region and Nation: Networks of Power in Eighteenth-Century Wearside', in *Economy and Culture in North-East England, 1500-1800*, eds. Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie (Woodbridge, 2018), 230-249; Walton, 'North', 128. In the early seventeenth century Sunderland's coal trade amounted to around 2,000-6,000 tons per year. By the eighteenth century this had increased to over 200,000 and more than 300,000 tons by the 1730s. See B. Dietz, 'The North-East Coal Trade, 1550-1750: Measures, Markets and the Metropolis', *Northern History*, 22, 1 (1986), 291, Table 1.

470 Walton, 'North', 128.

western side of northern England and by the 1750s was a commercial centre operating on the world stage. Manchester flourished with the production and distribution of cloth goods whilst leading seaports of Yorkshire, such as Hull, expanded through supplying vessels for the coal trade and engaging in the North Sea economy.[471] In Cumberland the likes of Whitehaven and Workington grew through their participation in the colonial trade and by exporting coal to Ireland.[472]

Newcastle may have been outpaced by growth elsewhere but this should not be taken to mean the town was in decline. As the commercial centre of the region, Newcastle had few rivals when it came to providing opportunities for apprentices, and along with Bristol, Exeter, Norwich and York remained the only other significant regional centre that offered 'extensive trading connections and elaborate civic privileges'.[473] Numerous contemporary observations attest to the vibrancy of trade and commerce in Newcastle during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. For Guy Miège 'so great' was the trade of Newcastle in the late seventeenth century 'that it may be called in that respect the *Bristol* of the North.'[474] In 1724 it was similarly observed that Newcastle 'is now in a most flourishing State of Wealth and Commerce.'[475] Essentially Newcastle continued to be the region's main commercial centre, only its dominance was offset by growth in places like Sunderland and Gateshead and further afield in the northern counties. In the face of this economic growth the prestigious Merchant Adventurers and the highly lucrative coal trade meant Newcastle remained appealing for those in search of a mercantile career.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how patterns of recruitment to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers changed between 1600 and 1750. At the beginning of the seventeenth century a typical company apprentice was roughly as likely to be the son of a yeoman, gentleman, merchant or tradesman. From the 1630s onwards this pattern began to change and by the 1660s gentlemen had come to dominate the company's intake of apprentices. By this time long-distance migration had become far less common and recruits were much more likely to have lived

471 Ralph Davies, 'The Trade and Shipping of Hull 1500-1700' (East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1964), 29 states of Hull: 'In the eighteenth century only Liverpool, among the major ports of England, was to see a faster growth.'

472 Walton, 'North', 123-130.

473 Peter Clark, introduction to *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. 2, ed. Clark, 27.

474 Guy Miège, *The New State of England, Under our Present Monarch K. William III*, 3rd ed. (London, 1699), Part I, 83.

475 Thomas Cox, *Magna Britannia et Hibernia, Antiqua & Nova*, vol. 3 (London, 1724), 608.

within twenty or so miles of Newcastle before taking up residence in the town as an apprentice. These changes would have had a marked effect on the character of the merchant community. Migration is an important cultural and social process that determines the makeup of communities and connects them to regions. As long-distance migration declined, the Newcastle merchant community became less open and more 'club like'.[476] Social relations would also have been affected. Chapter Six will demonstrate the extent to which merchants monopolised the Newcastle corporation and the findings presented here have important implications for this discussion. As the merchant community became less socially diverse, so did the officeholders of the town as they were largely drawn from the merchant population. This enhanced the sense that an 'elite' ran the town, one unrepresentative of both its occupational and social structure.

476 Whyte, *Migration*, 1; King, 'Sociability', 63-64.

Chapter Four

Merchant Housing

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers merchant housing in detail. The main issue addressed is how far housing helped distinguish the merchant community from the rest of Newcastle society. Housing was an accepted indicator of social status in early modern England. Size, style and location all said something about the social position of the inhabitants, meaning that this chapter can let merchant housing speak for the merchants themselves.[477]

Housing is explored under three main themes: location, size and room function. Regarding location, polarisation between rich and poor was pronounced in Newcastle and occupational zoning contributed to how this was experienced on a daily basis, with merchants tending to congregate in certain areas contemporaries regarded as notably affluent. The size of merchant housing will be discussed in terms of the number of hearths and rooms they contained. The 1665 Hearth Tax provides the raw data regarding hearth numbers. This tax worked on the assumption that wealthier people lived in larger houses containing more hearths. This underlines the significance of housing when it comes to thinking about the relationship between wealthy merchant families and the rest of the town population. Room function shows how merchant families used the domestic space for daily living. One theme that emerges is the growing tendency towards room specialisation, with the provision of hospitality being particularly noted. Chapter Five will argue that wealthy Newcastle merchants adhered to a wider bourgeois material culture of politeness and respectability, distinguished from the gentry material culture by the acquisition of the latest consumer goods. The provision of hospitality will be put forward here in anticipation of this argument. Ahead of making these cases, to underline the significance of housing in early modern England something will first be said on the importance of becoming a householder.

4.2 Becoming a householder in early modern England

477 Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982), 140; Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2009), 110-132 esp. 116; Matthew Johnson, *English Houses 1300-1800: Vernacular Architecture, Social Life* (London, 2010), 118.

Becoming a householder was an important stage in the lifecycle that usually followed marriage. Marriage signalled the passing from one state to another, a new direction with fresh duties of status, authority and dependency conferred on husband and wife alike.[478] The age at which people married gradually fell across the early modern period. At the beginning of the seventeenth century men were usually twenty-eight and women twenty-six years old, but by the 1750s these averages had fallen to 26.4 and 24.9 respectively.[479] Despite the increasing tendency for earlier marriage, the English conformed to the 'European marriage pattern', characterised by a high age of first marriage amongst women together with celibacy for a substantial proportion.[480] To a large extent age at first marriage was determined by the social convention that young people, especially men, were only ready to marry when in the position to establish and maintain an independent nuclear family.[481] As apprentices were not allowed to marry during their period of service, this convention was not easily ignored. A typical apprenticeship with a Newcastle Merchant Adventurer lasted up to ten years which means merchants were at least in their mid-twenties before starting a family of their own. Parents frequently helped by leaving household goods in their wills. Some went as far as setting entire properties aside. In 1751 for example, merchant Abraham Dixon stipulated that after his death his wife Alice was to enjoy the family home in Westgate Street only so long as their son remained unmarried. Come his wedding day, she had six months to find alternative accommodation, leaving the property vacant for the new couple.[482]

Not everyone married. Aside from simply living alone, unmarried people may have cohabitated with relatives or lodged a room in a shared house. In late seventeenth-century London, lodger merchants tended to occupy the lower end of the wealth scale, suggesting a lack of funds placed a permanent City lease out of reach. It is significant that 85 percent of merchant lodgers had no dependents listed with them as this links lodging to bachelor status.[483] Of further importance is the fact that around half of these lodgers, together with

478 David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1997), 286-288; Anthony Fletcher, 'Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England', *History*, 84, 275 (1999), 431.

479 E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1981), 255. It should be noted that the average age of marriage varied with occupation and social status. Members of the aristocracy and upper gentry married comparatively early while wage earning labourers and artisans married younger than landholding yeomen and husbandmen. See: Wrightson, *English Society*, 68.

480 Wrightson, *English Society*, 68.

481 Ibid.

482 TNA, PROB/11/751/354.

483 Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: the Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001), 36.

other unspecified occupants, shared a surname with the householder.[484] Evidently a familial link was used to live in the City.

Lodging was also fairly common in Newcastle, and not just amongst the poorer sort. Property advertisements placed in the *Newcastle Courant* during the early eighteenth century show apartments for the genteel and high-status lodgings were a feature of urban living for those further up the social scale. Some apartments were self-contained households consisting of several rooms.[485] For example, an advertisement dating from 1724 offered an 'Apartment in Mr Whitefield's House in the Close, with Brew-house, Cellars, and other Conveniences' for let.[486] In 1726 a landlord was seeking tenants for 'A Large new House in two Apartments', one containing 'Eleven very good Rooms', the other eight.[487] It seems probable that some merchants renting these lodgings owned a full household in the country and simply used them when in town attending to business.[488] For others lodgings would have been their only place of residence. Positively identifying such people cannot be done with total precision, but an absence of household goods in a deceased person's inventory may point to someone who rented furnished accommodation. George Dobson is a case in point. His 1676 inventory totals £94 18s 10d yet besides 'purse and wearing apparel' the only other listing is the merchandise he owed at the time of his death.[489] Michael Dent's inventory compiled in 1694 similarly only lists 'purse and apparel', a few debts he was owed along with a thirty-second share in a ship.[490]

In cases such as these there is often an absence of evidence in the will that the person was married, suggesting that for merchants lodging, living with relatives or in rented accommodation, this was a step towards becoming a householder with a family of their own. That Newcastle merchants both lodged rooms and lived with relatives while unmarried can again be seen in evidence drawn from wills. John Reed is one example. John was married but his brother Joseph lived with him and his comments offer insight into the conditions under which men might cohabit with relatives. In his 1720 will John said:

> My will further is that my said Brother shall continue & live with my wife if he thinks proper untill he be married or my said wife leave off keeping house but in case he marrys or my wife

484 Ibid.
485 Adrian Green, 'Houses and Households in County Durham and Newcastle c.1570-1730' Durham University PhD thesis (2000), 264-265.
486 *NC* no. 195 Mar. 10, 1724.
487 *NC* no. 37 Aug. 8, 1726.
488 Green, 'Houses and Households', 274.
489 DUL, DRP/I/1/1671/D3/2.
490 DUL, DPR/I/1/1694/D5/1.

> leave of keeping house or go to Lodgings that then she shall not be obliged to keep or maintain him with meat Drink[,] Washing or Lodgings.[491]

Providing he thought it 'proper', John expected his brother would continue living with his widow as long as he remained unmarried. It is probable that this assumption reflected wider practice. Indeed, speaking of his cousin Ann who lived with him and his wife, in 1727 Hostman James Brankston said 'I expect she shall live with my Deare Wife untill she does marry.'[492] Specific examples of unmarried merchants living with relatives can be seen with Ralph Smith who lived with his brother and sister in the 1730s and William Gray who was cohabiting with his sister and her husband Robert Ellison (also a merchant in Newcastle) when he made his will in 1673.[493] The latter arrangement obviously worked well as William left Robert a sizeable estate containing various properties. Of life with his sister and her husband, he wrote appreciatively that he had 'found much comfort & contentment in my dwelling & cohabiteing wth them'.[494] It is notable that while William owned bedding and some chairs 'In his owne Chamber', he also had three pictures in the dining room and various items of furniture in the hall and two other chambers.[495] This suggests that he helped furnish the home he shared with his sister and brother in law and that he was included in the household decisions, in this case regarding what pictures were displayed.

Occasionally merchant households provided rented accommodation for people outside the immediate family. This can be seen in the inventory of Robert Bowes which lists items in 'Brother Henry's Roome' and 'James's Roome', the latter presumably not a direct relation.[496] The inventory of Robert Mitford made in 1676 similarly lists goods in rooms called 'S^{r}. George Vanes Chamber' and 'M^{r}. Whites Chamber'.[497] Judging by the small number of inventories that feature rooms named after the occupiers we may surmise that only a few merchant households let rooms to non-family members. If the lodger owned all the furnishings in his room then they would not appear in the inventory, meaning we would overlook their presence in the household. But on the whole Newcastle merchants were probably more likely to be lodgers themselves.

4.3 Architectural evidence: the houses of Alderman Fenwick and Bessie Surtees

491 DUL, Registered Copy of Will, DPR/I/1/13/f. 99; BI, YDA11, Registered Wills, vol. 74, f. 441.
492 DUL, DPR/I/1/1727/B6/1.
493 DUL, DPR/I/1/1734/S11/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/G5/1-4.
494 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/G5/1-4.
495 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/G5/5.
496 DUL, DPR/I/1/1700/B9/3-4.
497 DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/M15/3.

Early modern Newcastle was a growing town, its recorded population doubling from 16,000 in the 1660s to around 29,000 by the 1750s.[498] Accounts written by people who visited Newcastle during this time often note the economic vibrancy that underpinned expansion, offering compliments on the appearance of its most affluent areas. Sir William Brereton paid a visit in 1635 and felt it was 'beyond all compare the fairest and richest towne in England, inferiour for wealth and building to noe cittie save London'[499] Celia Fiennes spent time in Newcastle in the late 1690s and similarly felt it 'most resembles London of any place in England, its buildings Lofty and Large, of brick mostly or stone'; the streets 'very broad and handsome and very well pitch'd'.[500] Writing his famous *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* took Defoe to Newcastle which he felt was 'a spacious, extended, infinitely populous Place' with attractive public buildings such as the 'very noble' Exchange.[501] John Macky published his account of his journey through England in the early eighteenth century and in it describes Newcastle in less glowing terms: it was 'irregularly built, up-hill and down' but it did have some 'spacious Streets', particular Pilgrim Street which contained some 'very fine Houses and Gardens'.[502]

Remarks such as these show us how genteel and educated contemporaries were drawn to Newcastle's finer buildings and the homes of its richest inhabitants, particularly those in and around Pilgrim Street that belonged to the merchant elite. Enormous wealth was generated through the coal trade and many merchants sought to demonstrate their success in the fabric of the town. It was a similar story in places such as Bristol, Norwich and King's Lynn, where the growth in trade between 1550 and 1700 generated profits that were invested in urban development. Expectations of further growth in commerce then acted as a spur to both public and private building.[503] Evidence of such urban regeneration has led Borsay to argue that an 'urban renaissance' followed the Restoration in English provincial urban centres as they were revitalised by an expanding economy. For Borsay this urban rejuvenation amounted to a second phase of Hoskins's 'great rebuilding' which is usually dated to the period 1570-1640.[504] He argues that this later phase was 'of far greater quantitative

498 Joyce Ellis, 'A Dynamic Society: Social Relations in Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1660-1760', in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1984), 194.

499 William Brereton, 'The Journal of Sir William Brereton' in *North Country Diaries*, ed. J. C. Hodgson, Surtees Society, Second Series, vol. 124, (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1915), 15.

500 Celia Fiennes, *Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary* (London, 1888), 176; David Hey, 'Fiennes, Celia (1662-1741), Traveller', *ODNB*.

501 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies*, vol. 3 (London, 1727), 192.

502 John Macky, *A Journey Through England*, vol. 2 (London, 1722), 216-217.

503 Vanessa Parker, *The Making of King's Lynn: Secular Buildings from the 11th to the 17th Century* (Chichester, 1971), 158.

504 W. G. Hoskins, 'The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640', *P&P*, 4 (1953), 44-59.

importance than its predecessor' as whereas the first great rebuilding had a dramatic impact on the inside of houses, raising levels of comfort and convenience, in the second phase domestic facades were transformed with the adoption of classical architecture.[505]

Useful as the idea of an 'urban renaissance' is, we must be careful not to overstate the extent to which material change follows strict periodization; significant exterior alterations took place well before 1660.[506] In particular, Withington's argument that 'two renaissances' occurred in English towns and boroughs between 1550 and 1750—a sixteenth-century 'civic renaissance' preceding the better known 'urban renaissance'—questions Borsay's theory. Furthermore, according to Withington the roots of the urban renaissance can be traced to the Elizabethan era, challenging the status of 1660 as a defining moment.[507] The evidence for merchant housing in early modern Newcastle would seem to support Withington as merchants were already well housed in the sixteenth century and continued to rebuild throughout the seventeenth.[508] A fine example is Alderman Fenwick's House which stands in Pilgrim Street (Image 4.1). The property that we now know by this name was built by Thomas Winship in the mid-seventeenth century, replacing an earlier single story dwelling dating from the sixteenth century.[509] The house came into the possession of Nicholas Fenwick in 1695 through his marriage to Sarah, daughter of Thomas Winship.[510] Nicholas Fenwick (1663-1725) was a renowned Newcastle merchant of considerable wealth. Not counting his real estate, his will set aside around £2,500 for his seven children.[511]

Image 4.1: Alderman Fenwick's House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

505 Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), 47-59.

506 Green, 'Houses and Households', 270.

507 Phil Withington, 'Two Renaissances: Urban Political Culture in Post-Reformation England Reconsidered', *The Historical Journal*, 44, 1 (2001), 239-267.

508 Green, 'Houses and Households', 269, 271, 279.

509 D.H. Heslop and G. McCombie, '"Alderman Fenwick's House"—A Late Seventeenth Century House in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle', *AA*, Fifth Series, 24 (1996), 129-170; Green, 'Houses and Households', 263-264.

510 Alderman Fenwick, whose full name was Nicholas Fenwick, was not the same Nicholas Fenwick who married Sarah Whinship. This Nicholas Fenwick was a merchant and always referred to as such, and it seems he was never active in local government. Most probably the Nicholas Fenwick whom we know as Alderman Fenwick was the nephew of Nicholas Fenwick the merchant. See: Heslop and McCombie, 'Alderman Fenwick's House', 135-136.

511 DUL, DPR/I/1/1725/F3/1.

Source: Co-Curate, https://co-curate.ncl.ac.uk/resources/view/47052/.

When Nicholas and Sarah acquired the property in 1695, he was thirty-two and she was around twenty-three years old.[512] Nicholas immediately set about modernising it: 'being the Estate & Inheritance of my wife but built by me since our Marriage', as he explained in his 1725 will.[513] The house has a front elevation of four floors and a basement. Moving up from the cellar with its stone walls and floor, is the ground floor. Seemingly in the late seventeenth century the floor was divided into an open space to the left of the front door and a room to the right, perhaps an office or counting room where Fenwick would have conducted his daily business. As we will see below, other merchant houses in Newcastle featured offices and a plan for a merchant property in Bristol dating from 1724 also includes an office for the owner's use.[514] The internal arrangement of merchant houses show attempts were often made to separate private living spaces from those used for business. This can be seen in Fenwick's house with the partition (likely added in the late seventeenth century) that

512 John Robinson, 'Monuments in the Athol Chantry, St. Andrew's Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne', *AA*, Second Series, 18 (1896), 47 gives the inscriptions from their monuments, now destroyed.
513 DUL, DPR/I/1/1725/F3/1.
514 John Bold, 'The Design of a House for a Merchant', *Architectural History*, 33 (1990), 75-82.

gave direct access from the front door to the private part of the house, enabling people to enter and not disrupt those discussing business matters.[515]

On the first floor, the front room appears to have always been the principal chamber of the house, likely where the family entertained guests. Domestic sociability and hospitality were important aspects of urban social life, especially amongst the middling sorts, and rooms set aside for entertaining were often amongst the most well-appointed (see below).[516] One feature of the room that promotes this idea is the plastered ceiling. The ceiling suggests the room was not originally divided and the pattern is typical of the period in Newcastle. A comparable design can be seen in the Lord Mayor's parlour in the Guildhall, which dates from c.1658. A similar motif appears in Bessie Surtees House, also home to important merchant families.[517] High quality softwood bolection panelling covers the plaster walls and this also dates from the seventeenth century, likely installed by Fenwick as part of his post-1695 changes.[518] Again, this panelling points to the room's status within the house and confirms its function for entertaining guests; a space that reflected the social standing of the family. Adding panelling to a room was popular in the late seventeenth century, often replacing plaster walls decorated with hangings or tapestries, and shows Fenwick followed the fashions of the times.

Moving up to the second floor, a lobby provided direct communication between the rooms at the front of the house and those to the back. Suits of rooms would have been expected in the homes of the well-to-do and could consist of a sequence that included an ante room followed by a chamber and closets forming an apartment which might contain a parlour or drawing room.[519] The third floor is divided into six rooms along the lines of the roof trusses, with seventeenth-century style fireplaces located in two end rooms. Originally a cupula adorned the roof of the house, a noted feature of properties in London and port towns such as Whitehaven, though this has since been removed. The house enables views from the leads, the rear stair tower reaching all the way to the roof and split to enable access to the front parapet. Viewing from the leads is usually associated with surveying landholdings and landscapes from atop country houses but, as demonstrated here, it was also a feature of urban houses.[520] Merchants most likely used these viewing platforms to show business

515 Heslop and McCombie, 'Alderman Fenwick's House', 152.
516 Carl B. Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England: Cultural Ties and Social Spheres in the Provinces, 1660-1780* (Manchester, 1998), Ch. 6.
517 Heslop and McCombie, 'Alderman Fenwick's House', 152-153.
518 Ibid., 154.
519 Ibid., 158.
520 Green, 'Houses and Households', 278.

acquaintances ships in port, and as with offices, this demonstrates how merchant houses contained features linking them to the occupation of the owners, distinguishing them from those of the gentry.[521] Turning to the front of the house, the most striking feature is the brick façade. Most houses in seventeenth-century Newcastle were timber framed, though some had stone ground and first floors. As noted earlier, Newcastle merchants continued to rebuild their homes throughout the seventeenth century, and brick was initially favoured to replace timber framed structures. This resulted in some impressive houses, often as lavish as properties in London.[522] Indeed, the closest parallel to Alderman Fenwick's House is Schomberg House in London, Pall Mall, built c.1698.[523] Brick was the fashionable building material of the time and Alderman Fenwick's House demonstrates Newcastle merchants followed the latest trends, helping to introduce London tastes into the provinces.

Bessie Surtees' House is another surviving merchant housing from the seventeenth century (Image 4.2). Located on Sandhill this property is a twentieth-century amalgamation of two houses originally known as Milbank House with a brick façade, and Surtees House with its distinctive windows spanning the entire length of the building. (In Image 4.2 Milbank House is to the left of Surtees House.) Both houses illustrate the kind of buildings that were located on Sandhill, The Close, The Side, parts of Quayside and other principal streets in the town.[524] As such, they provide us with an idea of the kind of houses inhabited by Newcastle's more prosperous merchants. Most descriptions of Sandhill from the seventeenth and eighteenth century describe it as a street full of shops and merchant houses. Writing in 1649, William Gray said: 'In this market place is many shops, and stately houses for merchants, with great conveniences of water, bridge, garners, lofts, cellars and houses of both sides of them.'[525]

Image 4.2: View of Bessie Surtees House, Sandhill, Newcastle upon Tyne, April 1958

521 Ibid., 274, 278.
522 Ibid., 269, 271, 279.
523 Heslop and McCombie, 'Alderman Fenwick's House', 167.
524 C. Pamela Graves, 'Building a New Jerusalem: The Meaning of a Group of Merchant Houses in Seventeenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne, England', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 13 (2009), 392.
525 William Gray, *Chorographia or a Survey of Newcastle upon Tyne* (1649; reprinted 1884, Newcastle upon Tyne), 64.

Source: T&WA, DT.TUR/4/976/4.

All in all, Sandhill was 'very convenient for merchant adventurers, merchants of coales, and all those that have their living by shipping.'[526] Mackenzie published his account of Newcastle in 1827 and from this we can see that whilst the appearance of the shops was undergoing change, the basic character of the street was still largely intact:

> The east and north sides of the Sandhill are enclosed by lofty and commodious buildings, many of which contain very large and magnificent rooms, that indicate the grandeur of the ancient merchants of Newcastle. Most of the shops, until lately, retained their old form, being quite open in front, and without glass windows. But they are now all modernized…[527]

According to the 1664 Land Tax, Milbank House was in the possession of Mark Milbank, merchant and alderman of Newcastle. In the following year the property was purchased by Thomas Bewick, also a merchant in the town. Bewick left the house to his wife in his will and stipulated that it was to pass to his daughter Philadelphia, who married Utrick Whitfield, a corn merchant apparently worth £40,000 when he died in 1743. Two years before his death

526 Ibid.

527 E. Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, Including the Borough of Gateshead*, vol. 1 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1827), 162.

Whitfield had sold the house to Robert Carrick and it was he who added the brick front around the time it came into his possession.[528] The property is timber-framed and consists of five storeys and is four bays wide. Some fairly major structural alterations were made at some point, most likely in the mid-seventeenth century when the interior was redecorated. These changes included enlarging the house by adding two upper storeys and installing a brick chimney stack that runs through the centre of the building. A timber-framed rear wing was also added, consisting of four storeys.[529] Little now survives of the seventeenth-century interior, the notable exceptions being the fourth level room which retains its original panelling and a contemporary large stone fireplace with highly decorative overmantel. A stone fireplace on level two also dates from this period.[530]

In the mid-seventeenth century Surtees House was owned by Ralph Cock, governor of the Merchant Adventurers and town mayor in 1634. In 1657 Ralph's daughter Ann married Thomas Davison and the house remained in the possession of the family until 1770 when it passed to another merchant, Snow Clayton. The house is a timber-framed structure consisting of five storeys and, on the upper floors, five bays. It seems probable that the distinctive façade originally had a full height projecting bay window, while the shop front to the ground floor dates from the 1930s, around the time when the level one rooms were refurbished.[531] Moving up to the second level, more original decoration survives, most notably the panelling and the fireplace, which dates from c.1657. The carved overmantel is particularly noteworthy as the friezes show the arms of the Cock and Davison families along with the arms of the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers, a feature intended to show visitors the close connection the families had to one another whilst simultaneously celebrating their mercantile status.

Entering the third level we find a room entirely of the seventeenth century. Panelling is fitted to the walls and ceiling and is of a plain design except for central and corner plaster decorations. A large stone fireplace with brick hearths flanked by Ionic timber columns and a fine carved overmantel with Corinthian columns and a geometric pattern is completed by firebacks with the arms of Charles I and James I.[532] The fourth level was divided into two rooms at an early date and two authentic features remain, the plastered bird and floral motif on the ceiling and the fireplace. Very little of the rear wing is original as the function of the structure was changed from being service accommodation for the main rooms of the house to

528 D. Heslop, G. McCombie and C. Thomson, '"Bessie Surtees House"—Two Merchant Houses in Sandhill Newcastle upon Tyne', *AA*, Fifth Series, 22 (1994), 5-13.
529 Ibid., 12.
530 Ibid., 13.
531 Ibid., 15-16.
532 Ibid., 19.

a link block to a wholly new building. One thing we can note is that the small rooms of the original wing were heated by fireplaces in a four-flue brick chimney.[533]

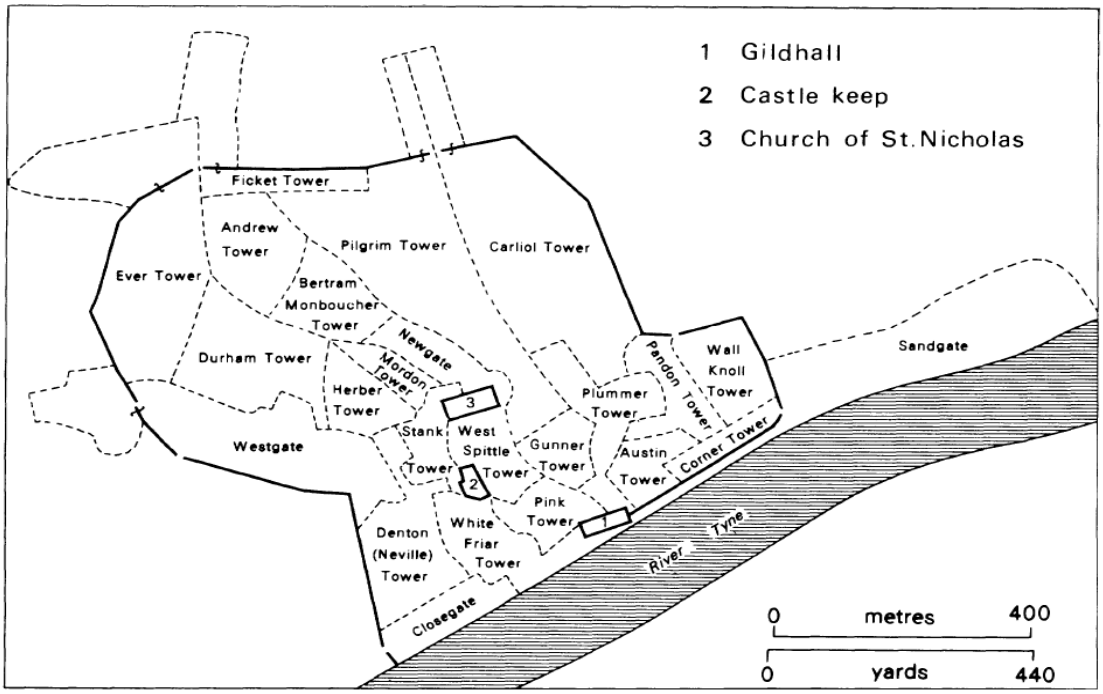
Properties such as Milbank House, Alderman Fenwick's House and Surtees House were occupied by some of the most prosperous merchant families in Newcastle and lesser merchants would have lived in far more modest houses. Nevertheless, these elite properties are still useful to consider as they exemplify the broader point that members of the merchant community used housing to represent their high status. The location of these elite properties is also significant. Pilgrim Street gained its reputation as the affluent area of Newcastle from the concentration of merchant wealth. This 'merchant district' was separate from less affluent areas such as Sandgate and served as a visual representation of the merchant community.

4.4 Location of merchant housing in Newcastle

The urban environment, and the different experiences people had of it, both reflected and reinforced divisions within the social structure.[534] The subdivision of towns into different social zones was one way these divisions became manifest, with more affluent and powerful citizens often living closer to the town centre than the poorer sort. Other patterns could overlay this spatial organization, such as occupational zoning, producing 'micro-communities' within the larger population.[535] Topographical surveys can help uncover these patterns and reveal the 'associational character of mercantile societies'.[536] Langton provides such a survey for seventeenth-century Newcastle. From this we can see that merchants tended to congregate in specific areas in the southwest of the town, in Closegate, White Friar Tower, Pink Tower and Corner Tower wards (Figure 4.1).[537] In contrast, the 'shipping and services' occupational grouping, which includes shipwrights, butchers, brewers, builders, carpenter and the like, was mostly to be found in the east, in the wards of Carliol Hill, Pandon Tower and Sandgate.

533 Ibid., 22.
534 Peter Borsay, introduction, to *The Eighteenth-Century Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1688-1820*, ed. Peter Borsay, (London, 1990), 18.
535 Ibid.
536 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 62.
537 John Langton, 'Residential Patterns in Pre-Industrial Cities: Some Case Studies from Seventeenth-Century Britain', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 65 (1975), 16.

Map 4.1: The wards of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1665



Source: Langton, 'Residential Patterns', 10.

Those employed in the manufacturing trades tended to live in the wards of Pilgrim Tower, West Spittle Tower and Denton Tower.[538] Overall, despite some trades being more dispersed throughout the town, Langton concludes that there was 'strong tendencies towards occupational grouping' in seventeenth-century Newcastle, with the wards in the southwest having higher concentrations of the wealthiest trades while the poorer wards having a greater share of the poorer trades. A slightly more complex picture emerges as Langton goes on to point out that wards could be wealthy regardless of their 'occupational make-up.'[539] His suggestion is that core areas of the more affluent trades contained the wealthier members of these same trades and, more importantly, that these areas 'creamed off' the prosperous practitioners of the crafts whose members were normally poor.[540] The core findings of

538 Ibid., 16-18.
539 Ibid., 19.
540 Ibid., 19-21.

Langton's study encourage comparisons to be made with the merchant communities of York and Liverpool which displayed similar tendencies to congregate in specific areas.[541] In York, during the period 1660-1720, there was a tendency for merchants to concentrate themselves in the best commercial sites, a 'concentration of function and wealth' that remained a key feature of the mercantile community well into the eighteenth century.[542] Hearth Tax records for Liverpool for the period 1662-1673 show merchants gathered in four central streets of the town, all of which gave easy access to the Mersey, the customs house and the bank. A generation later this pattern was largely intact.[543]

Langton's study offers statistical support to contemporary descriptions of Newcastle which show wealthy merchants tended to group in certain streets to create a 'merchant district'. As we saw earlier, in his 1649 description of the town William Gray identified Sandhill (see Figure 4.2) as a street adorned with many 'stately houses for merchants'.[544] His observation that it was 'very convenient for merchant adventurers, merchants of coale, and all those that have their living by shipping' shows that, like their counterparts in York and Liverpool, Newcastle merchants lived close to the economic hub of the town.[545] Gray continues:

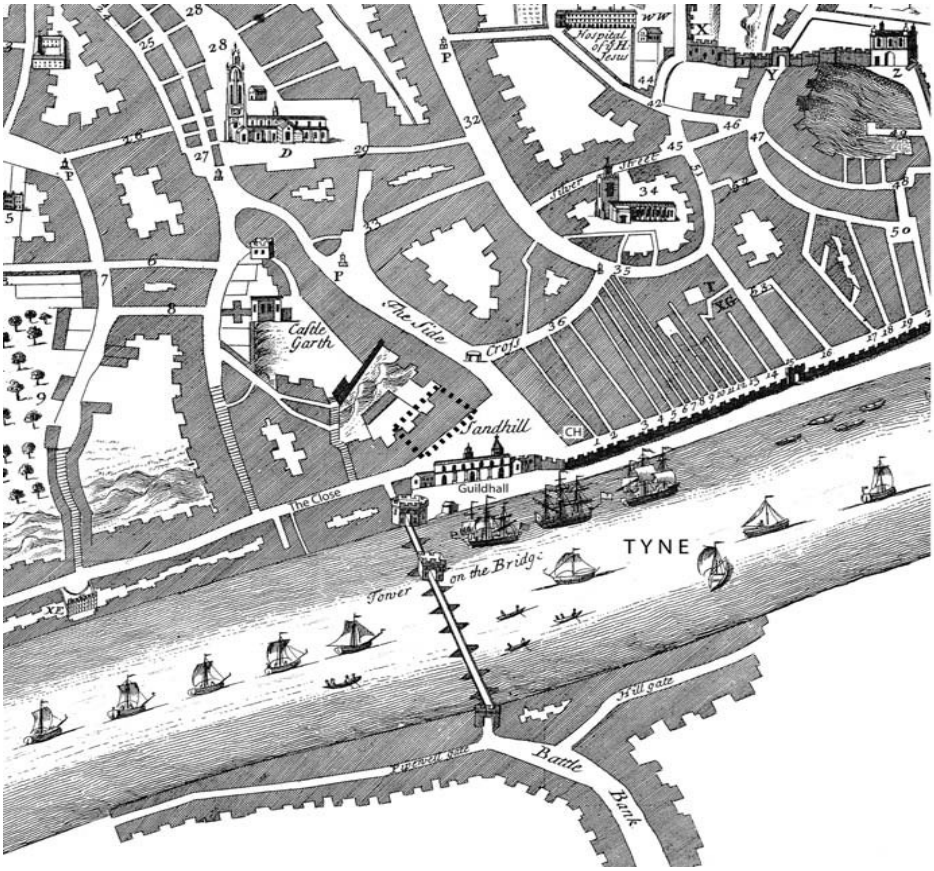
> There is a navigable river, and a long Key or Wharfe, where ships may lye safe from danger and stormes, and may unlode their commodities and wares upon the Key. In it is two cranes for heavy commodities, very convenient for carrying of corn, wine, deales, &c., from the Key into the Water-Gates, which is along the Key Side, or into any quarter of the towne.[546]

Merchants stored their merchandise in a combination of warehouses, cellars and lofts which meant proximity to the quayside where goods were unloaded was a benefit to living on Sandhill with its 'great conveniences of water, bridge, garners, lofts, cellars'.[547] The guildhall also stood on Sandhill. This served as the 'Town-Court' where the mayor kept his court every Monday and the sheriff held county court each Wednesday and Friday. A court of admiralty was also held in the guildhall each Monday, along with less frequent meetings such as the annual guilds where the mayor and burgesses offered up their grievances.[548] The

541 Langton, 'Residential Patterns' 21; Peter Earle, *The Earles of Liverpool: A Georgian Merchant Dynasty* (Liverpool, 2015), 145.
542 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 51-54.
543 Ibid., 59.
544 Gray, *Chorographia*, 64.
545 Ibid.
546 Ibid.
547 Ibid.
548 Ibid., 65.

weigh-house was located under the town court and nearby was the 'Towne-House' where the clerk of the chamber and chamberlains received revenues for coal, ballast, salt, grindstones and so on. Adjoining this was the 'Almes-House', above which was the 'stately court of the merchant adventurers'.[549]

Map 4.2: Map showing area around Sandhill, Newcastle upon Tyne



Source: Graves, 'Building a New Jerusalem', 393. This section is taken from the Corbridge map which dates from 1723. The dotted area indicates the location of Milbank House and Surtees House discussed earlier in this chapter.

Sandhill was, then, the locus of the Newcastle government and the place where many of the buildings associated with trade and commerce were situated. Living here meant merchants were close to the instruments of their economic and political power.

Moving on from Sandhill, Gray tells us that in the next street, The Close, there was 'many stately houses of merchants and others', including the Earl of Northumberland.[550] The Close runs off Sandhill parallel to the Tyne and properties such as Milbank House and Surtees House were typical of the buildings found here in the later seventeenth century

549 Ibid., 64-65
550 Ibid., 66.

(although around this time some of the timber framed frontages were being replaced with brick).[551] Continuing his perambulation Gray describes The Side, which runs northwards from Sandhill, as containing various 'shops for merchants, drapers and other trades'.[552] 'Next up the towne north', he goes on, 'is Middle-Street, where all sorts of artificers have shops and houses.' To the east was the Flesh Market which he considered 'the greatest market in England' on account of the ten or so miles people travelled to collect provisions for their families.[553] Describing market days he writes: 'There is such a concourse of people out of the country in the streets every Saterday to sell all sorts of corne and flesh, buy all sorts of provision for house and family, receive money of maisters of cole for cole-work, that every Saterdays Market is like a fair, for all sorts of wares provisions and manufactours.'[554]

The description of Newcastle Gray has left us shows us that the merchants living on Sandhill, The Close and The Side were close to the bustling centre of town where people traded and bought the goods they needed for themselves and their families. Not all merchants chose to live in such busy surroundings however. Pilgrim Street, considered by Gray to be 'the longest and fairest street in the towne', is where Alderman Fenwick's House stands towards the south, but further northwards the street crossed much open land at the time Gray was writing.[555] At the northern extremity of the street, located near Pilgrim Gate, was the 'princely house' known variously as Anderson Place, Grey Friars and New House.[556] This mansion was built in the sixteenth century by Robert Anderson and purchased by the merchant and coal owner Sir William Blackett (1621-1680), first baronet, in 1675 from fellow merchant and MP Sir Francis Anderson.[557]

Writing in 1789 Brand testified to the splendour of the property, which in terms of magnificence he supposed was 'the most so of any house in the whole kingdom within a walled town', adding it was 'surrounded with a vast quantity of ground.'[558] Leonard Knyff's depiction (which was probably made between 1697 and 1703) shows a sprawling house surrounded by extensive gardens and carefully laid out lawns, closely resembling a country house with a tree-lined avenue leading up to the property from Pilgrim Street.

551 Graves, 'New Jerusalem', 392-393.
552 Gray, *Chorographia*, 67.
553 Ibid., 68.
554 Ibid.
555 Ibid., 71.
556 Ibid.
557 Mark Blackett-Ord, 'Blackett, Sir William, First Baronet (1621-1680), Merchant and Mine Owner', *ODNB*.
558 John Brand, *The History and Antiquities of the Town and County of the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne*, vol. 1 (London, 1789), 41.

Image 4.3: Merchant housing on The Side, Newcastle upon Tyne, c.1880

Source: Co-Curate, https://co-curate.ncl.ac.uk/side/.

Image 4.4: The Close, Newcastle upon Tyne *c.*1879. Showing a merchant house to the left of the stair

Source: Co-Curate, https://co-curate.ncl.ac.uk/the-close/.

The house itself was a leader of architectural fashions in the region during the seventeenth century and its position at the head of Pilgrim Street was highly significant.[559] Pilgrim Street was 'the smartest merchant address in Newcastle'.[560] It contained the best shops and was distinct from the residences of the gentry and clergy along Westgate. The position of Grey Friars at the head of Pilgrim Street demonstrated the relationship the occupants had to the mercantile community of the town.[561] The house also had a political significance. Blackett purchased the mansion in 1675 following election to Parliament and a baronetcy in 1673 and his decision to do so shows how large houses symbolised social distinction and political standing in provincial towns such as Newcastle.[562]

Gray's 1649 account confirms that merchants tended to congregate in certain areas of the town. He summarised the situation by explaining that whilst many merchants, mayors, alderman and other wealthy inhabitants had once had their 'faire' houses in the Flesh Market, 'In after times, the merchants removed lower down towards the river, to the street called the Side, and Sandhill, where it continueth unto this day.'[563] However, over the course of the next century this situation changed significantly. Residential patterns for merchants in early modern towns were far from static, the 'fluidity of commercial society' creating a more changeable picture.[564] In Liverpool, merchants were beginning to withdraw to the town periphery by the 1740s while taxation records for York show merchants were prepared to move house several times during their careers, though the most prosperous tended to establish themselves in a single parish.[565] Bristol's social elite was mostly composed of wealthy merchants and their aspirations were also 'discernible in the city's form and fabric'. Rich and poor lived in close proximity during the Middle Ages but in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries suburbs developed that were increasingly socially segregated.[566] Gentleman merchants in Leeds also began to leave the congested town centre after 1660 and migrate towards the more rural periphery.[567] Somewhat earlier, wealthy merchants in Jacobean London acquired country houses within a few miles of the capital to serve as places

559 Martin Roberts, 'The Staircase from Anderson Place, Newcastle upon Tyne', *English Heritage Historical Review*, 1 (2006), 47-62. Anderson Place was demolished in the 1830s to make way for the construction of Grey Street.
560 Adrian Green, 'The Big House in the English Provincial Town', in *The English Urban Renaissance Revisited*, eds. John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (Cambridge, 2018), 116-143.
561 Ibid.
562 Ibid.
563 Gray, *Chorographia*, 62-63.
564 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 43.
565 Ibid., 53.
566 Roger Leech, *The Town House in Medieval and Early Modern Bristol* (Swindon, 2014), 369-370.
567 R. G. Wilson, *Gentleman Merchants: The Merchant Community in Leeds 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971), 195-198.

of refreshment for the summer months and as somewhere to escape during bouts of plague.[568] By the early eighteenth century many Newcastle merchants had left their traditional places of residence and moved towards the outer regions of the town. Writing in 1736 Bourne explained how The Close 'was formerly that Part of Town where the principal Inhabitants liv'd', but 'Of late Years these Houses have been forsaken, and their wealthier Inhabitants have chosen the higher parts of the Town.'[569] Bourne's observation is supported by early eighteenth-century property advertisements placed in the *Newcastle Courant* which show that by the 1720s properties located in the traditional centre of the Quayside were only rarely occupied as elite houses; more commonly they were sub-divided or put to commercial use.[570]

Overall, we can see that the residential pattern of the Newcastle merchant community underwent significant change between 1660 and 1750. With the examples of Liverpool, York, Leeds and London we can connect the migration of Newcastle merchants to the flight of the middle classes to the suburbs which 'completely reversed the traditional social arrangement of urban space.'[571] This long-term process is usually connected to expanding urban populations, which in Newcastle meant a rise from 16,000 in the 1660s to around 29,000 by 1750.[572] With an expanding population came the demand for housing and by the eighteenth century gardens to the rear of Newcastle properties were beginning to fill with smaller houses, workshops, stables, brewhouses and various ancillary buildings in the type of yard arrangement that can still be seen in Wilson's Court in the Groat Market and George Yard in Bigg Market.[573] The extent to which this infilling contributed to the topography of the town can be seen when comparing the Corbridge map of 1723 to the later Charles Hutton map dating from 1770. The former shows much open space within the medieval boundaries of the town, while the latter shows fewer gardens and more buildings, illustrating how open ground was gradually being filled with brick houses, squares and streets.[574] This crowding encouraged many wealthy merchants to move to the quieter suburbs and in so doing raised the profile of suburban life in replication of wider practices amongst England's provincial urban elites.

568 R. G. Lang, 'Social Origins and Social Aspirations of Jacobean London Merchants', *EcHR*, 27, 1 (1974), 41.
569 Henry Bourne, *The History of Newcastle upon Tyne, or the Ancient and Present State of that Town* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1736), 126.
570 Green, 'Houses and Households', 264.
571 Borsay, introduction, 19.
572 Green, 'Houses and Households', 263; Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 194.
573 John Grundy et al. *The Buildings of England: Northumberland* (London, 1992), 412.
574 Ibid.

4.5 Merchant housing: evidence from the 1665 Hearth Tax

To provide a more detailed investigation into Newcastle merchant housing this section uses data collected from the 1665 Hearth Tax return. As discussed in Chapter One, interpreting this source is complicated for a number of reasons. Above all the line between exemption and liability was finely drawn. Some paying householders were only marginally better off than those exempted which means deciding what it meant to live in a single-hearth home as opposed to one with two or three cannot be done with reference to levels of wealth alone.[575] Despite such difficulties of interpretation, historians have used the tax to reconstruct the urban social structure with the following results. At the base of the social pyramid three quarters of the population formed a broad substratum of poor householders exempted from paying the tax. Above was a comfortable group consisting of roughly a quarter of the urban population who lived in houses with more than two hearths. At the very top was a wealthy elite living in properties with nine or more hearths, a small group representing 1 or 2 percent of the urban population.[576] Overall the five-hearth home emerges as a boundary marking the more prosperous urban households from the less affluent.[577] In Exeter for example, five-hearth homes formed the 'rich heart of the city' and provided wealthy merchants, craftsmen and esquires with a 'comfortable standard of living'.[578] In Durham, members of the gentry and professionals also tended to live in homes with between five and nine hearths.[579]

Table 4.1 gives an overview of the 1665 Hearth Tax data for Newcastle. Most houses contained one or two hearths. Exemption was granted for those unable to pay the tax which in 1665 amounted to 41.5 percent. Of the households liable for payment, slightly less than 36 percent had a single hearth and 22.6 percent had two hearths. One important point to note is the uneven distribution of the population throughout the town. Half of all households were located within the six eastern wards of Sandgate, Wall Knoll Tower, Corner Tower, Pandon Tower, Austin Tower and Plummer Tower and only 9.5 percent in the central wards of White Friar, Pink Tower, Gunner Tower, Stank Tower and West Spital Tower.

Table 4.1: Newcastle in the 1665 Hearth Tax

575 Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villages in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1974), 41.

576 Peter Clark and Paul Slack, *English Towns in Transition 1500-1700* (Oxford, 1976), 113.

577 Tom Arkell with Nat Alcock, *Warwickshire Hearth Tax Returns: Michaelmas 1670 with Coventry Lady Day 1666* (London, 2010), 73; H. M. Spufford, 'The Significance of the Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax', *Proceedings of the Cambridgeshire Antiquarian Society*, 55 (1962), 53-64.

578 W. G. Hoskins, *Industry, Trade and People in Exeter 1688-1800* (Manchester, 1935), 116.

579 Adrian Green, introduction to *County Durham Hearth Tax Assessment Lady Day 1666*, eds. Adrian Green, Elizabeth Parkinson and Margaret Spufford (London, 2006), liii-lv.

	1	2	3	4	5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12+	Liable	Exempt	Exemption Rate (%)	Total
Wall Knoll Tower	51	32	13	14	9	7	1	0	0	127	96	43	223
Sandgate	62	36	20	6	6	4	0	0	0	134	510	79.2	644
Austin Tower	27	19	16	25	11	8	0	0	0	109	9	7.6	118
Pilgrim Tower	49	24	11	11	7	2	2	2	0	108	46	29.7	154
Corner Tower	8	2	9	10	4	8	4	1	0	47	0	0	47
Closegate	23	9	8	8	7	4	2	2	3	66	10	13.2	76
Carliol Tower	32	15	10	5	3	3	0	2	0	70	35	33.3	105
West Spital	3	14	7	8	3	4	1	0	0	40	16	28.6	56
Plummer	16	27	15	9	4	8	1	0	0	80	14	14.9	94
Westgate	13	16	2	5	3	3	4	0	2	49	20	28.9	69
White Friar	29	7	4	5	6	4	2	0	2	59	11	15.7	70
Newgate	4	7	2	7	3	5	1	2	1	32	0	0	32
Stank Tower	7	3	5	8	2	7	1	0	0	33	4	10.8	37
Denton/Neville Tower	39	19	6	3	4	0	2	1	1	75	32	34.6	107
Ficket Tower	7	2	4	4	0	0	1	0	0	18	31	63.3	49
Bertram Monboucher Tower	7	6	4	6	2	2	1	0	2	30	6	16.7	36
Andrew Tower	20	15	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	41	45	52.3	86
Durham Tower	19	10	1	2	6	2	0	2	0	43	36	45.5	79
Gunner Tower	10	9	9	3	4	4	1	2	1	43	2	4.4	45
Ever Tower	24	9	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	38	58	60.4	96
Mordon Tower	22	19	8	4	0	1	0	0	0	54	12	18.2	66
Pink Tower	0	0	2	7	3	8	4	4	2	30	0	0	30
Herber Tower	23	8	6	3	5	2	0	0	0	47	12	20.3	59
Pandon Tower	33	25	10	14	6	8	0	0	0	99	33	25	132
TOTAL	**528**	**333**	**180**	**169**	**98**	**94**	**29**	**18**	**14**	**1472**	**1038**	**41.5**	**2510**

Source: Richard Welford, 'Newcastle Households in 1665', *AA*, Third Series, 7 (1911), 49-76; TNA, E179/254/20

Sandgate was the most populous ward in Newcastle. It contained a quarter of all households, many of them the most deprived in the town, employed in the shipping trades as mariners, shipwrights, carriers and so on.[580] Writing in 1736, Bourne described Sandgate in terms that would have been familiar to his seventeenth-century predecessors. It was an area with

> a vast Number of narrow Lanes on each Side of it, which are crouded with Houses. It is chiefly inhabited by People that work upon the *Water*, particularly the *Keelmen*. The Number of Souls in this Street and the Lanes belonging to it, is computed to several Thousands.[581]

580 Langton, 'Residential Patterns', 179.
581 Bourne, *History of Newcastle*, 154.

Exemption from the Heath Tax was granted for properties already excused from paying local church and poor rates and those with an annual rental of less than 20*s*. Many Sandgate households fell into this category but, even so, in December 1666 a riot was narrowly avoided as 'the common people' clamoured against tax collectors who were twice driven out of the area 'with violence' by residents complaining they had 'not bread to eat.'[582]

Comparing exemption rates across the wards makes it possible to map the social topography of Newcastle more precisely. Table 4.1 indicates exemption rates of 13.2 percent for Closegate, 15.7 percent for White Friar and zero for Pink Tower, this being one of the three wards in which all households were liable to pay. Closegate, White Friar and Pink Tower all had exemption rates well below the average for Newcastle as a whole (41.5 percent). In contrast, Sandgate had an exemption rate of 79.2 percent, the highest of all wards.[583] Furthermore, of the 20.8 percent of Sandgate households eligible to pay, 46.3 percent had a single hearth, over twice the 21 percent overall average. Whilst it would be misleading to portray the inhabitants of all single-hearth houses, or indeed those exempted from paying the tax, as existing in abject poverty, these figures bear testament to the hardships faced by many Sandgate families. Living in a single-hearth or non-paying household did not necessarily mean indigence but undoubtedly it implied a fairly sparse living typical of the people contemporaries referred to as the 'labouring poor'.[584]

To add some context to the emerging picture, Table 4.2 sets the Newcastle data against Bristol, Norwich York and Exeter for comparison. In 1665 Newcastle had an overall exemption rate of 41 percent, making it comparable to Exeter in 1672 (40 percent), though of a different order to Norwich where 59 percent of households were exempted from paying the 1671 assessment. In contrast, the Bristol assessment of the same year only exempted 21 percent of households, the same proportion as York in the following year.[585] One factor we should note with regards to exemption rates is that after the inception of the Hearth Tax in 1662, disqualification from paying was increasingly likely to be granted on grounds of occupying low values dwellings—those under twenty shillings annual market rental value—rather than poverty.

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582 *CSPD, 1666-1667*, 321, 327, 330, 336.

583 The national exemption rate was around 30 percent. See: Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727* (Oxford, 2000), 81.

584 Keith Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer: A Scrivener, His City and the Plague* (New Haven and London, 2011), 26.

585 Welford, 'Newcastle Householders'; Slack, 'Great and Good Towns', 360, Table 11.2.

Table 4.2: Average number of hearths in Newcastle, Norwich, Bristol, York and Exeter households

Town	Proportion of households containing hearth totals (%)			Exemption rate (%)
	1-2	3-5	5+	
Newcastle (1665)*	76	18	6	41
Norwich (1671)	76	16	6	59
Bristol (1671)	53	37	11	21
York (1672)	56	29	16	20
Exeter (1672)	70	19	11	40

Sources: Welford, 'Newcastle Householders '; Paul Slack, 'Great and Good Towns 1540-1700', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2, *1540-1840*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge, 2000), 360, Table 11.2.
*Bracketed dates give year of Hearth Tax return

Yearly rental values in Northumberland and parts of Newcastle were much lower compared to southern England which would translate into higher exemption rates.[586] These exemption rates still tell us something important about the distribution of wealth in English towns though: whereas all early modern urban populations were polarized to some degree, in towns like Norwich and Newcastle this divide was particularly deep.[587] Norwich's high exemption rate was connected to the town's reliance on the 'new draperies' which contributed to its large proportion of poor accommodation.[588] Coal occupied a central role in the Newcastle economy but was seasonal and created much underemployment as demand slackened over wintertime. With such a large section of society dependent upon the coal trade, many of whom lived in the crowded Sandgate suburb, this created the higher rate of exemption displayed in Table 4.1.

Aside from its lower exemption rate, the figures for Newcastle are very close to those for Norwich. In both towns the proportion of homes with one or two hearths is considerably higher than York and Bristol and, to a lesser extent, Exeter. Overall, compared to Bristol and York, in Newcastle, Norwich and Exeter there were fewer households with between three and five hearths and more one and two-hearth homes. Given the lack of definition as to what it meant to live in, say, a three- or four-hearth home in Newcastle as opposed to a one- or two-hearth property in Bristol, comparisons between any two towns can only be tentatively drawn. What we can be fairly certain about is that in York and Bristol there was more middle ground in house size than was the case in Newcastle, Exeter and Norwich. A merchant living in a house with five or more hearths in any of these three towns would have been set apart

586 Adrian Green, 'Learning the Tricks of the Northumberland Hearth Tax', in *A Northumbrian Miscellany: Historical Essays in Memory of Constance M. Fraser*, eds. Elizabeth Ashton, Michael Barke and Eleanor George (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2015), 106-122.
587 Paul Slack, *Poverty & Policy in Tudor & Stuart England* (London, 1988), 67-72.
588 Slack, 'Great and Good Towns', 360.

from a greater proportion of the town population than would have been the case in Bristol or York where there was more medium sized properties containing between three and five hearths.

Compared to the neighbouring towns of Durham and York, the industrial function of Newcastle distinguished it further. York, like Durham, served as a county gentry centre and both had similar proportions of larger houses. In 1674 the exemption rate in Durham was 27.2 percent while 23.9 percent of households had one hearth, 29.4 percent between two and four and 18.6 percent five or more.[589] In York, 16 percent of households had five or more hearths; in Newcastle the proportion was just 6 percent. This demonstrates how the provision of housing reflected the function of the town: Newcastle had an industrial base and many smaller properties and higher exemption rates than social capitals like York and Durham which had no major industrial function but catered for the gentry with large houses.[590] Unlike Durham and York, the population of Newcastle lacked a solid gentry element, the social elite being made up of wealthy merchants instead. However, rather than living in properties of a comparable size to those of the urban gentry, merchants failed to compensate for the lack of a resident gentry in their own houses.[591]

The high exemption rates in Norwich and Newcastle give some idea of the hardships suffered by those employed in the main economic activity of their respective towns. Hearth Tax returns are equally informative about the merchants whose involvement in these same trades provided a very different way of life, one also reflected in housing.[592] The tax operated on the basis that wealthier people tended to live in larger houses with more hearths than the less affluent. Broadly speaking this was true. In Warwickshire towns the average number of hearths for mercers was four and medical professionals 3.3; for smiths, tailors, masons and butchers the figure was 1.4 and clothworkers one.[593] In Leicester, mercers and drapers generally had the most hearths (3.75), leatherworkers the least (1.96).[594] In London semi-

589 Green, 'Houses and Households', 84.

590 Clark and Slack, *English Towns*, 113-114.

591 Green, 'Houses and Households', 237. The situation was similar in Chester in the 1660s where gentlemen were taxed on the most hearths (6.9) followed by merchants (5.9). Both groups exceeded the town average of 3.5 hearths however. See: N. J. Alldridge, 'House and Household in Restoration Chester', *Urban History*, 10 (1983), 44.

592 John T. Evans, *Seventeenth-Century Norwich: Politics, Religion, and Government, 1620-1690* (Oxford, 1979), 22; Chris King, 'The Interpretation of Urban Buildings: Power, Memory and Appropriation in Norwich Merchants' Houses, c. 1400-1660', *World Archaeology* 41, 3 (2009), 471-488.

593 Tom Arkell, 'Interpreting Probate Inventories' in *When Death do us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England.*, eds. Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford, 2006), 80.

594 Chris Husbands, 'Hearths, Wealth and Occupations: an Exploration of the Hearth Tax in the Later Seventeenth Century' in *Surveying the People: The Interpretation and use of Document Sources for the Study of Population in the Later Seventeenth Century,* eds. Kevin Schurer and Tom Arkell (Oxford, 1992), 74.

skilled workers usually lived in three-hearth houses, skilled artisans in four, professionals and merchants in those with six.[595] In Edinburgh merchants involved in the Darien Scheme had on average 5.3 hearths, marginally more than New Kirk merchants (5.1). By contrast, professionals typically had four.[596] In Chester the overall mean for the town is 3.5 hearths but gentry households had almost twice as many with an average of 6.9; merchant houses typically had 5.9 hearths.[597] Using the Langton data it can be seen that Newcastle mayors tended to be taxed on the most hearths, averaging 8.4. For Hostmen the figure is 5.7 and for 'other merchants' 4.3. The next occupational group in the ranking is bakers with an average of 3.2 hearths. Thereafter there is a much more gradual fall in numbers between the thirteen occupational groups for which Langton provides data, indicating the town's merchants and those that served as mayors generally lived in properties with more hearths than other occupational groups.[598] However, it should be noted that these were not mutually exclusive groups: most Hostmen were also Merchant Adventurers while merchants with this dual membership dominated the senior positions within the corporation.[599] Distinguishing a person in terms of being a mayor, Hostman or Merchant Adventurer is, therefore, somewhat artificial, as often they were all three.

From the Langton data we see that Newcastle merchants tended to live in areas where larger houses were located. The greatest concentrations were in the southwest of Newcastle, in the wards of Closegate, White Friar and especially Pink Tower.[600] Merchants did not generally live in the Sandgate area. Table 4.3 gives the average number of hearths for each of Newcastle's twenty-four wards and enables us to place the merchant houses within their immediate surroundings. The overall average is 2.1 hearths, which splits the data into two groups of twelve: one group with above average hearth numbers consisting of the wards from Pink Tower through to Plummer Tower and a second group made up of the wards whose households had a hearth average of 2.1 or less, containing Pandon Tower through to Sandgate.

Table 4.3: Average number of hearths houses taxed on in each Newcastle ward, 1665

595 Peter Guillery, 'Houses in London's Suburbs', in *London and Middlesex 1666 Hearth Tax*, eds. Matthew Davies et al., Part 1 (London, 2014), 140-153.
596 Helen Dingwall. 'The Social and Economic Structure of Edinburgh in the Late Seventeenth Century', University of Edinburgh PhD thesis (1989), 252.
597Allridge, 'Houses and Household', 44.
598 Langton, 'Residential Patterns', 15, Table III.
599 Twenty-two of the thirty-one mayors who served between 1637 and 1684 were Hostmen. See Langton, 'Residential Patterns', 14. Chapter Six below provides a detailed analysis of the connection between merchant guild membership and office-holding.
600 Langton, 'Residential Patterns', 178-180.

Ward	Average hearths (N)	Ward	Average hearths (N)
Pink Tower	6.8	Pandon Tower	2.1
Newgate	4.3	Herber Tower	2.0
Corner Tower	4.3	Pilgrim Tower	2.0
Gunner Tower	3.7	Carliol Tower	2.0
Bartram Monboucher Tower	3.4	Neville/Denton Tower	1.9
Stank Tower	3.4	Durham Tower	1.9
Closegate	3.3	Wall Knoll Tower	1.8
Austin Tower	2.8	Mordon Tower	1.8
White Friar Tower	2.7	Ficket Tower	1.6
West Spital Tower	2.7	Andrew Tower	1.4
Westgate	2.7	Ever Tower	1.2
Plummer Tower	2.6	Sandgate	1.2

Source: Table 4.1 dataset

The wards of Closegate, Pink Tower and White Friar where merchants congregated all had relatively high hearth averages, especially Pink Tower, which tops the list. Merchants and Hostmen living in either Closegate or White Friar would have had a higher than average number of hearths in these two wards, but only those identified as serving as mayor in the Langton data would have had properties large by the standards of Pink Tower.

To sum up the evidence, we can say that Newcastle merchants tended to live in three wards, all of which contained properties that were large by the standards of the town, particularly Pink Tower. These three wards formed part of the heart of the town and were less densely populated than the eastern wards, particularly Sandgate. They also had relatively low exemption rates: fifteen wards exceeded the 15.7 percent exemption rate of White Friar, the highest of the three merchant wards. During the seventeenth century Newcastle merchants clearly lived in the more prosperous areas of the town. Both in the location and size of their houses they distinguished themselves from the vast majority of the population. Nevertheless, as noted above, despite the absence of a strong gentry element in the town, merchants failed to compensate in their house size and most lived in properties with between four and six hearths, very much on the five-hearth boundary that separated wealthy residents from the merely comfortable in most early modern English towns. So whilst it is true that the ‘merchant clique’ that was ‘pre-eminent in wealth and municipal power’ in Newcastle expressed its ‘social dominance … geographically in the existence of a mercantile quarter in that part of the city where its economic purposes were best served and where the institutions

through which it dominated the city were located', on a national level it would seem that they did not compete with the gentry in the size of their housing.[601]

4.6 Size of Newcastle merchant properties

To investigate this point more closely, this section continues to look at the size of merchant houses in Newcastle, only this time in terms of the number of rooms they contained. To establish the size of merchant properties attention is focussed on domestic rooms, rather than spaces used for workshops, shops, storage and suchlike that will be addressed later in the chapter. Information on room numbers is best collected from probate inventories. All documents giving the occupation of the deceased as 'merchant' have been crosschecked with merchant guild records listing members and included for analysis. Probate inventories form part of a larger set created in the process of probate granted by the ecclesiastical courts. When complete, these can include an inventory, a will, a bond of administration in cases where the individual died intestate, and a probate account which lists all deductions from the deceased's estate. Within this larger set inventories were designed as a check on the executor of the estate and a form of protection for legatees and creditors.[602] Inventories list all moveable goods, and the most valuable information recorded in this process for present purposes is the name of the rooms within which items were appraised. Not all inventories are suitable as some do not record each room, instead listing goods without mention of location. An added problem is that any room containing no goods escapes mention in the inventory. Empty rooms were probably not all that common in urban households but as inventories were compiled up to a year after death, if a room was emptied in this intervening period appraisers would pass over it in silence. Removing items from a deceased person's house was, however, an offence subject to ecclesiastical punishment.[603] How enforceable it was is another matter, though the fact many inventories detail fully furnished houses complete with expensive goods such as silver plate suggests "'meddling" of whatever kind was rare.'[604]

There are 126 extent probate inventories for Newcastle merchants for the period under study; of these, eighty-six (68 percent) are suitable for inclusion.[605] Excluded inventories

601 Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer*, 26; Langton, 'Residential Patterns', 21.

602 Jeff and Nancy Cox, 'Probate 1500-1800: A System in Transition', in *When Death do us Part*, eds. Arkell, Evans and Goose, 25.

603 Henry Swinburne, *A Briefe Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills* (London: 1635), Part 6, 55.

604 Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer*, 115.

605 The survival rate for probate inventories falls significantly towards 1700. Just over 10 percent of sampled merchant inventories are from the eighteenth century. The 1660s and 1670s are best represented: 59 percent of inventories in the dataset are from these decades.

include those that do not name individual rooms and those that appear to relate to merchants living in rented accommodation or cohabiting with family (see above discussion). Table 4.4 provides an overview of the data.

Table 4.4: Number of domestic rooms in Newcastle merchant houses

Rooms (N)	Households (%)	Rooms (N)	Households (%)
2	2.3	7	8.1
3	8.2	8	12.8
4	10.5	9	5.8
5	25.6	10	2.3
6	20.9	11	3.5

Source: Probate inventory dataset

A broad range of property sizes is apparent, from the 2.3 percent containing two rooms to those with nine or more accounting for 11.6 percent of the total. Between these two points we find the most common sized properties with between three and eight rooms, with the five-room house emerging as the most common of all. Due to the small number of inventories after 1680, the attempt to calculate change over time is hampered by small numbers having a disproportionate effect on the overall result. To limit the effect of this we can compare the average number of rooms listed in the eight post-1700 inventories to the number found in the inventories from the 1660s. This registers a slight rise from six to seven rooms. As we have seen above, by the early decades of the eighteenth century many merchants were leaving their traditional central location in the Sandhill area for the more spacious northern extremities of the town and these figures indicate such properties may have been larger.

Comparing similar data for other occupational groups is helpful for providing some context to these figures. Heley has calculated the size of a typical Newcastle tradesman's house in the early seventeenth century and finds just over three quarters had between one and six rooms, with 31.6 percent having between one and three and 45 percent between four and six. As Heley includes workshops and shops in her data, not all 'rooms' were domestic spaces and her results are not directly comparable to Table 4.4.[606] Even so, it would appear that it was not uncommon for a reasonably successful tradesman to live in a house of comparable

606 Gwendolynn Heley, 'The Material Culture of the Tradesmen of Newcastle upon Tyne 1545-1642: The Durham Probate Record Evidence', Durham University PhD thesis, 294-302, 371 Table 6.1b.

size to a merchant. With respect to other urban centres, Dyer has analysed close to 2,000 probate inventories made between 1530 and 1700 in the towns of Birmingham, Coventry, Derby and Worcester and found that housing varied with the economic fortunes of the town. In the 1680s, houses in Birmingham had, on average, 4.8 rooms while those in Coventry and Derby typically had 5.6 and those in Worcester six.[607] Houses occupied by the middling sort in London usually had between five and eight rooms during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[608] In Norwich during the period 1680-1730, 77 percent of houses had between four and six rooms; members of the merchant elite normally lived in those with between three and eight rooms.[609]

Compared to these towns, a typical merchant property in Newcastle with five or six rooms (46.5 percent of the total) is comparable to the kind found in other towns. The data for Norwich merchants is particularly close to that given in Table 4.4, which shows that 86 percent of merchant properties had between three and eight rooms. It will be recalled that the Hearth Tax returns for Norwich described a very similar picture to Newcastle, which tells us that in both towns merchant housing was not just similar in size, but also situated in an urban environment dominated by one and two-hearth properties. As with hearths, the number of rooms a house contained said something about the status of the occupier, and merchant housing in both towns reflected and reinforced divisions between rich and poor. This should not be exaggerated however. Generally speaking the Newcastle merchant community was more identifiable in the location of housing than its size. Elite properties like Grey Friars, Alderman Fenwick's House, Milbank House and Surtees House aside, most merchants lived in places normally associated with the urban middling sort. Where they were did show more exception was in the use of domestic space.

4.7 Room function and the use of domestic space

With an idea of the size of merchant houses, we can turn our attention to their layout and the function of the rooms. In medieval times houses of well-to-do merchants were often arranged around a yard of sorts, marking them out as a cut above properties built directly

607 Alan Dyer, 'Urban Housing: a Documentary Study of Four Midland Towns 1530-1700', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 15 (1981), 210-213.

608 Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Classes: Business, Society, and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, 1989), 209-212.

609 Ursula Priestley and P. J. Corfield, 'Rooms and Room Use in Norwich Housing, 1580-1730', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 16 (1982), 100; Chris King, '"Closure" and the Urban Great Rebuilding in Early Modern Norwich', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 44 (2010), 58.

onto the street. Some merchants included commercial premises around these yards which took on an important role as the centre of the establishment's activities.[610] In Newcastle, number 35 The Close exemplifies a style of merchant housing arranged in a rectangular form with a narrow courtyard taking up the central area. The longer edges of this rectangular layout reached to the riverside in ranges consisting of warehouses, counting houses and offices. Between these two ranges, the house enclosed one end of the rectangle and was positioned parallel to the river and near to the quay; at the other end a wall separated the property from the adjacent street.[611] Internally most medieval merchant houses conformed to the general pattern of an open hall (sometimes with an undercroft) with ranges for domestic and commercial purposes.[612] Houses with open halls, termed 'hallhouses', were characteristic of the medieval period but with the early modern era came a transition to a ceilinged hall with a chimney.[613] Within the hallhouse the open hall had served as the main living room but from the fifteenth century onwards this became a symbolic space, with parlours and other chambers growing in importance and assuming the traditional role of the hall.[614]

Houses designed specifically for merchants could follow a layout that reflected the needs of the occupier. One such design dating from 1724 for a property in Bristol has survived and offers insight into how merchant houses were planned around this time.[615] The house is rather straightforward in design: four rooms to each floor with the best stairs at the rear rising to the first floor and back stairs to one side reaching the full height of the building. The kitchen is detached in the rear courtyard with extra accommodation above for servants (removing the need for garrets in the main house).[616] Offices and warehouses are located to the rear of the house while the 'compter', or counting house, is located directly off the entrance vestibule. Visitors on matters of business could wait here without disturbing the family, a clear indication that merchants wanted private and business functions to be separate within the house.[617] In the words of the designer, the compter has 'a private door by the Back stairs to retreat without being seen by people that are visiting', also enabling the 'conveying away anything that should not be exposed to view.'[618]

610 Anthony Quiney, *Town Houses of Medieval Britain* (New Haven and London, 2003), 208-209.
611 Ibid., 211.
612 Ibid., 212.
613 Adrian Green, 'Houses in North-Eastern England: Regionality and the British Beyond, c.1600-1750', in *Archaeologies of the British: Explorations of Identity in Great Britain and its Colonies 1600-1945*, ed. Susan Lawrence (London, 2003), 66; Roger Leech, 'The Symbolic Hall: Historical Context and Merchant Culture in the Early Modern City', *Vernacular Architecture*, 30 (2000), 1-10.
614 Leech, 'Symbolic Hall'.
615 Bold, 'Design'.
616 Ibid., 76.
617 Ibid., 76-77.
618 Ibid., 79.

The plan features two parlours. By 1724 the parlour had taken on the role as the main living room. Leech has explored the retreat from the hall to the parlour as the principal living room in the houses of the Bristol merchant elite and argues it was prompted by changes in lifestyle that occurred as 'part of a much wider commercial culture'.[619] King makes a similar claim for Norwich. Rebuilding during the mid-sixteenth century saw the construction of large mercantile residences across the city that were characterised by the abandonment of the open hall and the provision of suites of rooms over two storeys, something he argues shows their investment in 'new forms of display and sociability'.[620] In the Newcastle and Durham region alterations to open hall houses began in the sixteenth century.[621] As was the case in Bristol and Norwich, the hall ceased to be the centre of daily living and became a largely symbolic space, a place where arms were displayed to indicate rank and responsibility within the civic order. A few Newcastle merchant inventories, two dating from the 1670s and one from 1702, contain evidence that arms and weapons were kept in the hall, implying adherence to these wider practices.[622] Not all merchants kept their weapons in the hall which points to the changing status of the 'symbolic hall' by the late seventeenth century. Hostman John Berwick kept his arms in a chamber for instance, and rather than displaying his two suits of armour in the hall (valued at £6 13s 4d) Edward Blackett kept them in a closet.[623] Displaying arms and armour in the hall became less popular when the need for local militia passed in the late seventeenth century. By this time the symbolic hall was ceasing to have 'any real significance in the domestic life of the early modern city' and with the Newcastle merchants we can see how emphasis shifted to parlours and dining rooms.[624]

Besides the hallhouse, another common layout of urban housing was the 'shophouse'. Shophouses usually featured living accommodation above a ground floor shop and were distinguished from hallhouses in four ways. Firstly they lacked an open hall; secondly they had a more restricted range of rooms; thirdly they were often without a hearth for heat and, fourthly, the ground floor that was used for a shop was also without a hearth.[625] While the Bristol middling sort were most likely to live in shophouses, these buildings were evolving and by the early seventeenth century traders at the 'pinnacle of the merchant community' had begun to shun houses with symbolic halls in favour of richly appointed shophouses. Such

619 Leech, *Town House*, Ch. 5; quote 109; Leech, 'Symbolic Hall'.
620 King, '"Closure" and the Great Rebuilding', 59-60.
621 Green, 'Houses in North-Eastern England', 66.
622 DUL, DPR/I/1/1675/C7/1-4; DUL, DPR/I/1/1679/S16/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1702/A7/1-2.
623 DUL, DPR/I/1/1667/B9/1; DUL, DPR/I.1.1690/B5/1.
624 Leech, 'Symbolic Hall', 7-9.
625 Leech, *Town House*, 118 and Ch.6.

properties often had two rooms on each floor with the front part of the house on the ground floor used for the shop and the room above serving as the main living room looking out over the street.[626]

Shophouses continued to be a feature of Bristol housing into the late eighteenth century. Judging from advertisements placed in the local newspaper, properties of a similar layout were also found in Newcastle.[627] In 1711, for example, a 'Dwelling-House and the Two Shops under it' located on the Sandhill was offered for let.[628] Probate inventories provide further evidence that Newcastle merchants lived in shophouses. One fifth of sampled merchant inventories list goods in shops, the word 'shop' taken to mean the buildings or rooms used for the retail sale of merchandise.[629] Unfortunately we cannot always be sure whether or not these shops were situated beneath the living accommodation in the form of a shophouse.

Thomas Wetherell is useful to take as an extended example of the problem. His 1672 will shows he owned 'three shopps', two of which were on the Tyne Bridge: one on the 'Westside', the other on the 'Eastside'.[630] Gray tells us that in the mid-seventeenth century there was 'many houses and shops upon the bridge' and doubtless some buildings served as both house and shop, but in Thomas's case it would appear his shops on the bridge did not form part of his dwelling house; not only were they spaced apart, both had lofts rather than living accommodation above them.[631] Where his third shop was located is unclear. In his will he ordered: 'all that my Mesuage Burgage or Tenement and three shopps … now in the possession of me … [situated] in a Streate or place there called Alhallow Banck, and alsoe all those my two shops, now in my owne possession, [situated] upon the Tinebridge', were to go to his son.[632] The two shops on 'Tinebridge' we have already accounted for, which leaves open the possibility that his third shop was part of the property located on 'Alhallow Bank', a street which ran east of Sandhill on 'the way to Allhallows church.'[633] We can be reasonably confident that Thomas lived in this area as the 1665 Hearth Tax lists Thomas Wetherall as living in Austin Tower ward, which was within the parish of Allhallows, as was Allhallow Bank.[634] In his will he also requests that he be interred in the parish church.[635] All this

626 Ibid., 126.
627 Ibid., 136-142.
628 *NC*, Nov. 14-17, 1711.
629 *OED*, s.v. 'Shop'.
630 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/3-6.
631 Gray, *Chorographia*, 38; DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/3-6.
632 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/3-6.
633 Gray, *Chorographia*, 66.
634 Welford, 'Newcastle Householders', 70-71.
635 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/1-2.

evidence points to the possibility that Thomas lived close to where he says his third shop was located, and the question posed is whether shop and house were within the same building. Thomas was liable for four hearths in the 1665 Hearth Tax assessment and his inventory appraises goods in six rooms (not counting his lofts). We would not expect to find open halls after the early seventeenth century which is consistent with Thomas' house featuring a room 'over the hall'. As we have seen, shophouses differed from hallhouses in not having an open hall, although the principal living room above the shop was often described as the 'hall', which may be the case in Thomas's inventory.[636] Thomas's house also contained a parlour. Parlours gradually assumed the role as the main living room from the hall, though in this case the presence of several beds and bedding indicates the room was also used for sleeping. More evidence for entertaining is actually found in the hall, which contained two 'greate Tables' two 'little tables', a dresser (covered with a dresser cloth), six buffet stools, a 'greate' cupboard, five leather chairs, a mirror, five pictures and some window curtains. The porr (poker) and fire shovel suggest this may have been one of the heated rooms liable for taxation in the 1665 assessment.[637]

Examining the layout of Thomas Weatherall's house tells us several important things about merchant housing in Newcastle. Firstly it shows merchants owned shops that were separate from their houses. Secondly it exposes some of the difficulties that accompany attempts to categorise merchant housing as a specific type. Leech notes that some houses do not fit neatly into either classification of hallhouse or shophouse and we should try to avoid imposing these terms too rigidly.[638] With respect to the declining significance of the hall, the evidence from Thomas's inventory would seem to suggest that this was a heated room and one with sufficient seating and tables to accommodate a number of people. The parlour, on the other hand, was clearly used for sleeping. By the seventeenth century people who still lived in houses with an open hall used the parlour as the main heated room in the daytime; only rarely was it used for sleeping. People living over shops also used parlours in the daytime, but the difference here was that they slept in the room at night.[639] Thomas's use of the parlour as a sleeping chamber is, therefore, likely indicative of wider practices favoured by merchant families living over shops in Newcastle.

How Thomas Weatherall used the rooms in his house is indeed reflective of other Newcastle merchants. Some of the items in his hall were found in other halls, especially

636 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/3-6; Leech, *Town House*, 117.
637 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/3-6.
638 Leech, *Town House*, 123.
639 Ibid., 297.

clocks, musical instruments and pictures. Just over one quarter of sampled inventories record clocks; of these, 70 percent were kept in the hall. Clocks were becoming more widely owned by the late seventeenth century, and whilst there was still a bias in ownership towards the higher ranks of society, some less affluent households were beginning to acquire them.[640] Nevertheless, they remained a status item that families might want to place in a prominent position. The hall was also where merchant families tended to keep musical instruments, listed in 12 percent of inventories (virginals being the most popular). Recreational music occupied a significant role in the cultural lives of people from all social levels—far more so than is often recognised. Very often recreational music-making was a group activity, and the tendency for merchant families to keep their musical instruments in the hall may indicate this was the place used for such entertainment.[641] Pictures brightened up any room and expressed taste in matters of art and were most often found in the hall. Significantly, in some of the larger collections, family portraits were singled out for the hall with others positioned elsewhere.[642] Portraits were often displayed in the home to 'register socially advantageous connections and herald the wealth and status of the sitter', and it is claimed that portraits of merchants played a role in the spiritual and moral life of the sitter, reminding them of the need for humility and the dangers of excessive pride in material success. Displaying portraits was one way of presenting themselves as men of 'scrupulous religious motivation to their friends and peers', and the decision to do so in the hall tells us that it was a space used by merchant families to present themselves to others.[643]

Aside from clocks, pictures and musical instruments, halls often contained seating and tables. To give an example, along with a clock, harpsicord and pictures, George Errington's hall contained two tables, nine chairs, three stools, some cushions and a case of drawers.[644] John Fell kept two tables in his hall, one 'large', one 'small', along with sixteen chairs, some pictures and a clock.[645] The furniture in Joshua Green's hall similarly included a dresser, two tables, twenty chairs and ten pictures.[646] That so much seating was provided may lead us to conclude that halls were regularly used for entertaining large numbers of guests. It is, however, worth bearing in mind that inventories only provide static snapshots of how

640 Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift, *Shaping the Day: A History of Timekeeping in England and Wales 1300-1800* (Oxford, 2009), 166-168.
641 Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), Ch. 4.
642 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1731/B8/1-2.
643 Tarnyn Cooper, 'The Enchantment of the Familiar Face: Portraits as Domestic Objects in Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham, 2010), 157-177.
644 DUL, DPR/I/1/1674/E4/1.
645 DUL, DPR/I/1/1668/F2/2.
646 DUL, DPR/I/1/1668/G6/1.

furniture was arranged within a household. Extra seating may have been stored in the hall until it was needed in the dining room or parlour. The custom of keeping musical instruments in the hall offers some evidence that it was a space for entertaining, even if it was commonly used as a reception room to meet guests rather than to formally dine with them. Decorating halls with pictures, portraits, clocks and so on made them more inviting and said something about the tastes and social position of the family. Halls therefore retained an important function within Newcastle merchant households and parallels can be drawn with merchant housing in Bristol and Norwich where halls had also become formal reception spaces by the later seventeenth century.[647] The manner in which Newcastle merchants utilised the hall was essentially part of a broader development which saw new modes of domestic life develop amongst the mercantile elite, one which favoured entertaining in smaller selective groups in parlours and dining rooms as opposed to large open halls.[648]

The inventories examined here date from 1660 onwards and document the end of the process which saw the hall lose its status as a room for entertaining. By this time most merchants would have entertained friends and peers in parlours or dining rooms, something we can see more clearly by analysing the contents of these rooms. Parlours are listed in 39 percent of the sampled merchant inventories; of these, 70 percent contained at least one bed, offering clear evidence that, as we saw with Thomas Weatherall, the parlour was a room used for sleeping. Sleeping in parlours may have decreased over time however. Only two inventories listing parlours date from the eighteenth century, too few to make any strong claims, but it can be noted that neither show evidence that the room was used for sleeping. Pictures, mirrors, cane chairs, a large oval table, 'stript hangings'—all these and more furnished these parlours but no beds are recorded.[649] The 1724 plan for a merchant house in Bristol discussed above includes two parlours and the comments made by the designer show an expectation that these rooms would be used for eating and entertaining. Of the main parlour he said: 'I have projected this Parlour every way full as large as the Withdrawing Room … for I think it an Error in people who make the Room where they eat … less than what the same Company afterwards go only to sitt and converse in.'[650] As for the 'Private Parlour', this was where 'the Master may treat with any Dealer, or drink a glass with a friend

647 King, 'Interpretation'; Leech, 'Symbolic Hall'.
648 King, 'Interpretation', 483.
649 DUL, DPR/I/11700/B9/3-4; DUL, DPR/I/1/1703/B8/3.
650 Bold, 'Design',79.

without disturbing the Family; Where the Family when alone may eat, and the young Men when Company is to dine with their Master.'[651]

The proposed house does not appear to have been intended for a particular merchant, meaning the design was intended to suit general requirements. This said, the house was aimed at wealthier merchants and more modest traders might not have enjoyed the same range of facilities in their houses. But the designer's assumption that the parlour would be primarily used for eating and entertaining doubtless reflected common practice at the time. This increasing room specialisation has been connected to the 'spatial relocation of bedsteads' from parlours to upstairs chambers that were singled out as 'special status rooms.'[652] In Norwich the proportion of parlours used for sleeping fell from 50 percent at the beginning of the seventeenth century to 18 percent by 1705-30. Evidence that the parlour was used for 'sitting' doubled to almost 80 percent in the same period.[653] Overton et al. found a similar trend in Kent with the proportion of households using parlours for sleeping falling from 61 percent in 1600-29 to 16 percent in 1720-49.[654]

This trend towards room specialisation was a European phenomenon toward which Newcastle merchants contributed.[655] Parlours support this claim and further evidence can be found with dining rooms. Dining rooms were also used for entertaining, especially in larger houses. After the fifteenth century town houses frequently had the arrangement of a single storey hall with the parlour and kitchen on the ground floor and chambers on the floor above. In more opulent houses one of the chambers on the first floor functioned as a 'great chamber', the principal reception room of the house often used for formal dining. Town houses of this model can be found well into the eighteenth century, the only real change was the name of the 'great chamber' which became the dining room.[656] Only eleven inventories list dining rooms but there is a discernible increase over time as eight are listed after 1686 compared to just three before. This means 3.5 percent of pre-1686 inventories list dining rooms compared to 20 percent of those made after 1686. As always, when trying to chart change over time with small numbers we need to exercise caution. But it is significant that the data fits Stone's chronology for when middle class families began to favour greater

651 Ibid.

652 Sasha Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London, 2016), 109 and Ch. 4.

653 Priestly and Corfield, 'Room Use', 107-109.

654 Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (London, 2004), 126, Table 6.4.

655 Room specialisation was a European phenomenon. See: Rafaella Sarti, 'The Material Condition of Family Life', in *The History of the European Family*, vol. 1: *Family Life in Early Modern Times 1500-1789*, eds. David I. Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli (New Haven and London, 2001), 1-23.

656 Mark Girouard, *The English Town: A History of Urban Life* (New Haven and London, 1990), 121; Priestly and Corfield, 'Room Use', 105.

privacy within the home, such as when dining.[657] Stone makes the point that the wealthy were more likely to retreat into privacy and it is notable that the Newcastle merchant houses with dining rooms each had at least six rooms; four houses had ten or more. On average, houses with dining rooms had 8.6 rooms and consulting Table 4.4 we can see that properties of this size were large by the standards of the Newcastle merchant community, implying they were owned by the wealthy.

Earle notes that dining rooms in middle class London households were normally the best living room in the house, ahead of the parlour. Between 1660 and 1730 there was a tendency for dining rooms to be 'upgraded' to provide an 'increasingly important second focus of display.'[658] The manner in which Newcastle merchants furnished the dining room would certainly imply they were used for entertaining and impressing visitors. A typical example was furnished with an oval table, ten thrum chairs, six cane chairs, an armchair and some window curtains. Andirons, a fender, and an iron chimney indicate this was also a heated room.[659] More elaborate was the dining room in the home of Thomas Jenison. Sixteen thrum chairs providing seating while tapestry hangings and a suite of red curtains and valance decorated the room. These items alone were valued at £19; then there was the damask tablecloths, a 'flower'd Callico Carpitt', cushions, damask napkins and numerous other items of linen. The family silver was also kept in the dining room, a sizeable collection worth just over £54. In all, the contents of his dining room came to a remarkable £121 16d 4d.[660] Such a concentration of wealth imparted a special status on the room and, more importantly, the activities that took place within it.

With an idea of how the hall, parlour and dining room were used for eating and entertaining, we can move on to ask how houses served another of the basic requirements of the inhabitants: sleep. We have seen that the parlour was used for sleeping in the majority of households during the seventeenth century. Most families needed far more space than this room alone however. Some crammed beds into almost every room, though in most cases dedicated sleeping chambers were favoured. Only rarely were beds placed in halls. An

657 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage: England 1500-1800* (London, 1977), 253-255; Cf. Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household* (Harlow, 2000), 73-83 which questions the notion of 'privacy as seclusion', arguing the latter did not necessarily provide the former.

658 Earle, *English Middle Class*, 290-292. For the role of the dining room in homes of retailers see: Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl, *Perceptions of Retailing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2007), 156.

659 DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/F3/1-2.

660 DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/J2/1. By way of comparison, the average dining room in a middle class London household in the period 1660-1730 contained just over £12 in goods. An exceptional merchant had the contents of his dining room valued at £101 when he died in 1701. See, Earle, *English Middle Class*, 292. Thomas Jenison was unusual in having such an expensive dining room but the example is useful for showing the importance that could be attached to the room.

average sized merchant house with five or six rooms normally had between two and four bedrooms. Usually one stands out as being the best bedroom which would have been used for socialising.[661] Often it is necessary to infer the best bedroom from its level of furnishing, particularly with regards the value of the bed and bedding. Taking Henry Slingar's house as an example, the bed and bedding in the chamber over the hall was valued at £4 3s 4d while that in the chamber over the kitchen was only worth £1 10s.[662] William Wallis's best bedroom contained £22 worth of goods; the bed and bedding alone was worth £8 and featured red serge curtains with a valance fringed with silk. Amongst the other furniture there was two 'Great' chairs covered with red cloth, a desk, chest of drawers, two tables covered with red carpets and some window curtains. What was likely to have been the second bedroom was not so well-appointed: the bed was still worth £6 but the contents of the room totalled a more modest £10 12s.[663]

Husband and wife would have slept in the best bedroom.[664] Children and servants had traditionally slept in the same room as the master of the household on moveable 'trunkle' or 'trundle' beds but judging by Newcastle merchant inventories it would seem this custom declined in the late seventeenth century. Whilst 90 percent of inventories made before 1680 list trundle beds, these largely disappear after 1682.[665] Fixed beds became more favoured for servants, which doubtless contributes to the disappearance of the moveable trundle bed.[666] Even then it was unlikely that these permanent beds would have been in separate rooms, as servant accommodation was rare before 1650, even in large households.[667] However, according to Stone this arrangement changed dramatically in the later seventeenth century as middle class families came to place greater value on personal privacy within the home. House plans show that corridors were installed to enable less intrusive access to chambers than was possible with interlocking suites of rooms; the disappearance of the trundle bed from rooms throughout the house is also taken by him as evidence of an increased desire for privacy.[668] Only two Newcastle merchant inventories have rooms listed as servant chambers and whilst

661 Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption & Gender in the Early Seventeenth Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford, 2012), 132.
662 DUL, DPR/I/1/1679/S16/1-2.
663 DUL, DPR/I/1/1664/W3/1-5.
664 Unless it was reserved for guests.
665 Evidence from Norwich suggests a similar decline of these types of beds across the early modern period. See: Priestley and Corfield, 'Room use', 115.
666 Handley, *Sleep*, 167.
667 R. C. Richardson, *Household Servants in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2010), 97.
668 Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 253-235; Richardson, *Household Servants*, 97-100.

these are significant for showing a greater desire for privacy, overall few servants in merchant households slept in rooms specifically for their personal use.[669]

Just over 10 percent of merchant households contained nurseries. Nurseries were rooms for babies and young children, especially those in the care of nursemaids.[670] Larger houses were much more likely to contain nurseries: three-quarters were in properties with seven or more rooms. The small number of nurseries means calculating whether they became more or less common over time cannot be dome with confidence. Nevertheless, there is some significance in the data which shows that whilst 23 percent of eighteenth-century inventories list nurseries only 8.9 percent of seventeenth-century inventories do so. The evidence is far from conclusive but it supports the trend towards greater room specialisation already noted.

Many merchant houses contained rooms besides the hall, parlour and the various sleeping chambers discussed so far. It is not the aim here to consider them all; rather to give a sense of how a typical merchant house used its internal space. Kitchens were of great importance in the early modern household and these will be discussed fully in Chapter Five. Kitchens, parlours, halls and bedrooms served a family's basic requirements of eating, sleeping, keeping warm and socialising. However, for merchants the utilisation of space within the house was also dictated by the nature of their livelihood, such as the need to have a shop incorporated within the property (see above). A merchant's daily business dealings might also require an office, something included in the 1724 plan for a merchant house in Bristol. The proposed house also features a 'compter', or counting house similarly used for business dealings.[671] Ralph Jackson, an apprentice merchant in Newcastle in the mid-eighteen century, makes many references in his diary to his master's office, and his description of how he 'came home & went into the Office' suggests this was a room either within the house or a building attached to it, as was fairly common in the residential housing of merchants. The office was also the place where Ralph often retired to write his diary or play his beloved German flute.[672] Only two merchant inventories list offices. One contained a desk, table and counter; the other a desk, map and some window curtains. Each also had a single bedstead,

669 DUL, DPR/I/1/1675/C4/1-4; DUL, DPR/I/1/1664/W3/6.

670 *OED*, s.v. 'Nursery'; Handley, *Sleep*, 106, 120, 142.

671 Bold, 'Design'; Leech, *Town House*, 305-306. Plans for three merchant houses in Bristol indicate that in the smaller properties the office was located immediately behind the residential house while in the larger it lay off the hall. Leech calls these plans the 'formalisation of what must have been a very common arrangement'.

672 TA, U/WJ/B, f. 11. Dated Aug. 5, 1750; TA, U/WJ/B, f.56. Dated Jan. 25, 1751; TA, U/WJ/C, f. 90. Dated Feb. 17, 1752.

suggesting offices doubled as sleeping chambers.[673] Had more eighteenth-century inventories survived it is probable that more would list offices than those dated earlier.

Newcastle merchants also used their houses for storing merchandise. Some rented warehouses near the quayside but space here would have been in high demand and cheaper alternatives must have been eagerly sought. Almost all merchants kept some merchandise in their lofts and cellars. William Hutchinson traded on a large scale and crammed all manner of goods into whatever space he could find. His inventory totals £9,687, a huge sum in merchandise that required numerous lofts, cellars and shops for storage.[674] Even merchants trading on a smaller scale might need more space than was available in their own house, and in such cases they used lofts and cellars in other properties. John Lancaster and William Bayles, for example, both stored merchandise in lofts and cellars belonging to the Blacketts.[675] Thomas Weatherall kept some of his merchandise in 'the Cellar by the Key'.[676] Several other inventories list merchandise stored in cellars and lofts recorded under a different name, and though the documents are silent on the matter, presumably rent was paid for the use of these spaces.[677]

The final aspect of merchant housing to consider is the provision for private coaches. Associated with status, private coaches 'cast a mantle of gentility' over travellers and sent a clear message to the rest of society.[678] Demonstrating the point, Samuel Pepys acquired one in the 1660s because he was 'almost ashamed to be seen in a hackney'.[679] Coaches were, however, a convenience few could afford in the seventeenth century. Only a small number of Newcastle merchants owned one, with just three sampled wills mentioning them. Ownership was expensive because besides the coach there was the cost of horses, typically in the region of £10-£20 each, though often more. Four was usually deemed a sufficient number by most gentlemen but anything up to six might be required, depending on the size of the coach and the terrain it was going to traverse.[680] Then there was the upkeep of the stables and coach

673 DUL, DPR/I/1/1669/N1/1-2.
674 DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/H22/3-6.
675 DUL, DPR/I/1/1689/B3/2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1660/L2/2. The inventories do not say which member of the Blackett family.
676 DUL, DPR/I/1/1673/W14/3-6.
677 DUL, DPR/I/1/1713/S1/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1703/B8/3; DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/O2/2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1674/E4/1.
678 Joan Parkes, *Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1925), 67, 77.
679 Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 8 (London, 1983), 173-174, 209. Dated Apr. 21, 1667 and May 11, 1667; ibid., vol. 9, 381, 383. Dated Dec. 2-3, 1668. Even for a man of Pepys' status a private coach was potentially above his station. Scarcely a six months after acquiring one he was warned by the earl of Sandwich's naval servant John Creed 'to avoid being noted for it', 'it being what I feared', Pepys added. See: ibid., vol. 9, 551. Dated May 10, 1669.
680 J. T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 1999), 125-126.

house, a special building that began to appear in the early seventeenth century.[681] The Blacketts were one of the few Newcastle merchant families who enjoyed the luxury of travelling by private coach. In his will Sir William Blackett left his coach, horses and stable to his wife so she could continue to travel in suitable style.[682] Their son William (1647-1705) continued the family business and kept his own coach and horses.[683] William Ramsay was another wealthy Newcastle merchant with a private coach. In his will he left his coach and horses to his wife along with all the 'furniture & accoutrements', also setting aside the annual sum of £12 10s to 'keepe & maintain a chariot or coach & horses'.[684] Finally there is Joshua Middleton. His wife was the recipient of his 'Chariot and two mares' and Joshua left instruction that his son John 'shall at his own charge find and provide a sufficient man and a good horse well accouterd and equip'd from time to time to attend my s^{d}. Wife when and as often as she has a mind to go abroad in her s^{d}. Chariot'.[685]

Property advertisements dating from the eighteenth century also show that some Newcastle merchants had provisions for keeping private coaches at their properties, Hebburn Hall being one example. This came into the possession of the Ellison family as part of the estate purchased by Robert Ellison (1614-78), a Newcastle merchant and governor of the Merchant Adventurers. In an advertisement seeking to let the property in the *Newcastle Courant* dating from 1726, Hebburn Hall is described as having 'Coach-houses, and other Conveniences, in good Repair' and, as such, 'fit for a Gentleman.'[686] Advertisements in the *Newcastle Courant* generally show that when it came to local housing suitable for the gentry, there was an expectation that space would be required for a private coach. Many owned private coaches to ease the demands of regularly commuting between town and country—a 'great convenience' in the words of Pepys.[687] Merchants often had business interests scattered throughout the region and private coaches could be handy for travelling between them. Others chose to live away from the hustle and bustle of Newcastle and frequent visits were needed to attend to business. Some of the country seats advertised in the *Newcastle Courant* were likely taken by wealthy merchants who commuted to Newcastle, much as the Ellisons

681 Ibid., 126.
682 DUL, DPR/I/1/1680/B16.
683 BI, YDA11, Registered Wills, vol. 63/f.196-199^{v}; Mark Blackett-Ord, 'Blackett, Sir William, First Baronet (1657-1705), Landowner and Mine Owner', *ODNB.*
684 DUL, DPR/I/1/1716/R1.
685 BI, YDA11, Registered Wills, vol. 73, f.272-f.274. Chariots to hold two or four people became fashionable after 1660 and usually cost between £20 and £30. See: Parkes, *Travel*, 73.
686 Green, 'Houses and Households', 230; A. W. Purdue, *Merchants and Gentry in North-East England 1650-1830: The Carrs and the Ellisons* (Sunderland, 1999), 13, 51-52.
687 Cliffe, *World*, Ch. 8; Green 'Houses and Households', 230; Latham and Matthews, *Diary*, vol. 9, 434. Dated Feb. 1, 1669.

of Hebburn Hall presumably did. One such property for sale in Ryton parish was actually advertised as a 'tradesman's country-house'.[688] Coaches therefore had a practical benefit in easing travel requirements. But as they were so expensive to purchase and maintain, ownership was a mark of status. Furthermore, by placing travellers outside the world of the pedestrian, private coaches altered social relations in the street. This means that whilst few Newcastle merchants owned coaches, it is significant that some did, as they would have helped reinforce this distinction between private travel and the pedestrian world.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has made several claims about the significance of merchant housing in Newcastle. Merchants tended to live in certain areas of the town that the Hearth Tax shows contained the largest houses. Contemporaries commented on the presence of these 'merchant areas' in places like Pilgrim Street which demonstrates how the merchant community was perceived spatially. Living in close proximity contributed to the associational character of merchant society. The picture was not static however. The withdrawal of Newcastle merchants from the busy town centre in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was part of a wider process whereby urban middle classes migrated towards the quieter suburbs. This shows merchants helped pioneer new approaches to urban living in Newcastle, a theme that continues with their use of domestic space. It could be argued that the associational character of the merchant community was compromised when merchants began to move away from the town centre. But as many households shared an approach to urban living they maintained common bonds. The use of dining rooms and parlours connected merchant households to a wider bourgeois culture that emphasised politeness and respectability. New ways of urban living were developing during the early modern period that merchants helped introduced into Newcastle. Newcastle was not a 'polite' town like Durham or York but one rooted in trade and the coal industry. That merchants involved in these sectors adhered to a broader bourgeoisie culture is, therefore, significant: it tells us the cultural importance of Newcastle and its merchants and shows how provincial centres were connected to changing national and international patterns of urban living.

An important caveat to add is that this examination of merchant housing shows much variation existed, both in terms of size and hearth numbers. For all the talk of *the* Newcastle merchant community, clearly it was not homogeneous. A hierarchy existed with a small elite

688 Green, 'Houses and Household', 230-231.

occupying the grandest properties (with Grey Friars the grandest of all) and those containing upwards of six or seven rooms. Households connected to the wider bourgeois culture of sociability and entertaining were more likely to be those of wealthier merchants. So whilst the previous chapter concluded that apprentice Merchant Adventurers were increasingly likely to be drawn from the gentry across the seventeenth century, this narrowing social base did not mean living standards amongst Newcastle merchants were becoming less varied. The next chapter will explore this point in greater detail.

Chapter Five

Material Culture and the Merchant Household

5.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the worldly possessions of Newcastle merchant families with the specific aim of establishing their living standards and determining how far their material culture accorded with the wider urban bourgeois culture of the period. Previous chapters have defined the urban bourgeoisie as the wealthy urban middling sort that often styled themselves as 'gents' on account of their 'dignified' approach to town life.[689] Here their material culture is considered in terms of the association it provided for the Newcastle merchant community.

The religious pluralism created by the Reformation combined with the decline of guild sociability and the rise of oligarchies meant the period 1550-1780 was one of crisis for urban associations. Yet from the late seventeenth century onwards, concern to protect the family and the household in the face of disorder manifested itself in the promotion of sociability and dignity.[690] Bourgeois dignity encompassed standards like being clean, polite and well-dressed for formal occasions and having good timekeeping. Sociability was a key value that found expression through material culture; for example, setting the table for dining and consuming tea and coffee.[691] Other aspects of bourgeois dignity included having rooms specifically set aside and furnished for certain occasions and assigning different household roles—and authorities—for men and women.[692]

From the eighteenth century onwards these standards would converge to form the middle class way of life, not just in England, but in Europe and colonial America, a process Hodge terms a 'Genteel Revolution.'[693] Crucially, the Genteel Revolution was not simply a matter of people emulating the lifestyles of the elite. 'Middling sorts improvised their own gentilities in urban centres on both sides of the Atlantic' as 'different status groups …

689 See above Chapter One, 4-5; Chapter Three, 72, 80.
690 Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort', in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke, 1994), 97-98, 102.
691 Christina J. Hodge, *Consumerism and the Emergence of the Middle Class in Colonial America* (Cambridge, 2014), preface, xvii-xviii, Ch. 4.
692 Ibid., xvii-xviii.
693 Ibid., *passim*.

simultaneously adapted gentility as a social process'.[694] Bourgeois collectivism was, then, mediated through material culture and a particular approach to urban living summed up in the term 'gentility'. Taking this body of research as evidence that bourgeois collectivism was articulated through material culture and a specific approach to urban living, the task here is to ask how far Newcastle merchants shared this style of living and contributed towards this wider culture. Doing so requires the chapter to draw on some of the literature of the consumer debate yet ultimately it aims to go beyond this discussion. When it comes to establishing living standards, rather than focusing on the novelties and luxuries that are often singled out as contributing to the formation of 'consumer society', the main area of interest will be the household goods and conveniences that made daily living more comfortable for the entire family, not just for a few select individuals labelled 'consumers.'

Since the 1980s there has been a groundswell of interest in material culture within the social sciences, largely as a result of consumption emerging as an important area of research. More precisely, it is the social and symbolic significance of commodities highlighted by consumption studies that has fuelled interest.[695] Current perceptions of consumption have changed a good deal since Marx and Weber used the rise of manufacturing to account for the emergence of modern consumption.[696] Today scholars generally oppose the idea that modern consumption arose as a result of industrialisation. Many now argue that a dramatic increase in consumer demand occurred before the industrial revolution that gave rise to modern consumer societies. Deciding exactly when this began has proved contentious however, with eras ranging from the Renaissance to the mid-twentieth century identified as potential starting points.[697] Understanding what motivated consumers in past societies to acquire certain goods has also changed significantly since early sociologists such as Veblen and Simmel argued consumption was emulative in nature, with goods supposedly filtering down through the social hierarchy. The theory has influenced many historians over the years, not least McKendrick who assigned emulation a key role in the 'consumer revolution' he argues took

694 Ibid, 16-17.

695 Michael Dietler, 'Consumption', in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, eds. Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (Oxford, 2010), 210.

696 Wouter Ryckbosch, 'Early Modern Consumption History: Current Challenges and Future Perspectives', *Low Countries Historical Review*, 130-1 (2015), 59.

697 Joel Stillerman, *The Sociology of Consumption* (Cambridge, 2015), 8-9, 23; Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* (London, 1988); Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (London, 2004); Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Project: the Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978); W. G. Hoskins, 'The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640', *P&P*, 4 (1953), 44-59.

place in eighteenth-century England.[698] But more recently the emulation theory is regarded as insufficient for explaining the complex motives people have for deciding which material goods to acquire.[699]

Informative as much of this literature is, the on-going debate is potentially limiting for the present task of assessing merchant material culture on its own terms, rather than through modern notions of a 'consumer society'. As Brewer has argued, the historical debate about the rise of consumer society is linked to the social and political commentary on consumerism that has taken place since the 1950s, with the ideological baggage this has imparted making it challenging to get beyond the debate and avoid becoming an 'interested party' in it, something this chapter seeks to do.[700] Thus while it draws on some of the contributions made to the debate, the aim is not to locate the embodiment of the consumer society in the individual and assess their contribution to its formation. Rather than individuals, households will be the point of reference. Households were the basic unit of consumption in the early modern period, something not always apparent in the consumption literature. Indeed, standard consumer theory is silent about familial ties and posits a '"sovereign" individual consumer' who behaves independently of other people's decisions.[701] So whilst references are made to individuals throughout the chapter, the assumption is that when it came to acquiring and using household goods, they acted as part of a unit. One example is the kitchen. Expenditure in the kitchen did not generally go on high value 'luxuries', but by investing in equipment associated with the preparation, cooking and serving of food, the whole family was engaged in the consumption process. A similar argument can be made with things like clocks, pictures, books and numerous items of furniture. Window curtains are another item frequently singled out as denoting elevated social status, but the privacy they afforded to urban living benefitted the whole family.

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698 Neil McKendrick, 'The Consumer Revolution in Eighteenth-Century Emgland', in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1982).

699 Maxine Berg, 'Consumption in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, eds. Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (Cambridge, 2004), 357; Colin Campbell, 'Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: a Character-Action Approach', in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (Abingdon, 1994); 40-57; Colin Campbell *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (London, 1987); Colin Campbell 'Romanticism and the Consumer Ethic: Intimations of a Weber-Style Thesis', *Sociological Analysis*, 44, 4 (1983), 284; Cissie Fairchilds,,'Consumption in Early Modern Europe. A Review Article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35, 4 (1993), 852; Peter Corrigan, *The Sociology of Consumption: An Introduction* (London, 1997), 11.

700 John Brewer, 'The Error of Our Ways: Historians and the Birth of Consumer Society', Cultures of Consumption Working Paper Series, No. 12, delivered at The Royal Society, London, 23 September 2003.

701 Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution*: *Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008), 7-25.

The material culture of Newcastle merchants is best understood within a European context. The urbanisation of populations, cultures, societies and economies took place in Europe since the early Middle Ages, with capital cities such as London, Amsterdam and Antwerp emerging in the post-medieval period as key examples of 'mercantile imperial cities' that were actively engaged in trade, both within and beyond Europe.[702] Expanding trade networks enriched many merchants and this had a direct impact on urban material culture. During the Renaissance for instance, many merchants made their fortunes from trading in luxury goods and celebrated their success through material possessions.[703] This connection between merchant wealth and urban material culture continued throughout the early modern period. A prominent example can be seen in the newly formed Dutch Republic where a new merchant elite came into being in the 1590s with the rise of the 'rich trades'. The rapid diffusion of mercantile wealth created a 'new connoisseurship' in the art of the Dutch Golden Age of the seventeenth century, with demand for fine décor for merchant housing acting as a continual spur to innovation.[704] The Dutch example highlights the significance of the urban setting. In the northern and eastern provinces of Holland the nobility occupied a more prominent role in society, but in the urbanised western provinces the wealthy merchants could, and did, think of themselves as their equals.[705] In Holland it was the same urban middle and upper classes that dominated the cultural life of the Republic; indeed, 'Dutch civilisation was an urban civilisation.'[706] In early modern England, urban material culture is similarly regarded as the product of a different set of values to those of the countryside, its particular characteristics being an emphasis on domestic sociability and hospitality.[707] Borsay also regards the urban middling sorts as the 'dynamic and decisive force' behind his 'urban renaissance', the idea that in the century following the Restoration provincial centres throughout England were rejuvenated by an expanding economy to

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702 Patrick O'Brien, 'Reflections and Meditations on Antwerp, Amsterdam and London in their Golden Ages', in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London*, ed. Patrick O'Brien et al. (Cambridge, 2001), 6.

703 Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London and New York, 1998), 15-19, 31-33, 122-128 and *passim*.

704 Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford, 1995), 344-5, 534, 555-6; Anne Gerritsen, 'Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands', *Journal of Design History*, 29, 3 (2016), 228-244, esp. 233-234 which shows how seventeenth-century merchants contributed to the process whereby global goods were domesticated into Dutch material culture, such as when they posed for portraits wearing imported Japanese silk gowns.

705 Maarten Prak, trans. Diane Webb. *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age*, (Cambridge, 2005), 134.

706 J. L. Price, *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic During the 17th Century* (London, 1974), 64.

707 Carl B. Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England: Cultural Ties and Social Spheres in the Provinces, 1660-1780* (Manchester, 1998), Ch. 6.

become leisure facilities and sites for heightened consumer demand.[708] It is within this wider urban context that the material culture of Newcastle merchants is best situated.

Historians of material culture have not entirely neglected merchants. Key studies by Weatherill and Overton et al. analyse large numbers of probate inventories yet they incorporate merchants within larger social groupings, making it difficult to assess their individual contribution.[709] In Earle's study charting the rise of the middle classes in London between 1660 and 1720 the topic of merchant material culture receives some attention, albeit in a wider discussion of middle class domestic expenditure.[710] In contrast to such studies, this chapter gives merchant material culture centre stage. Considering how embedded merchants were in the expanding world of goods, the lack of interest in their material culture is surprising, especially given contemporaries noted the significance of merchants as consumers. In 1577 William Harrison wrote vividly about rising living standards in Essex, and although he regarded this as something affecting much of society, he nevertheless singled out merchants, knights and gentlemen as enjoying a particularly widened range of goods. Indeed, 'in neatnesse and curiositie', it was merchants who exceeded 'all other.'[711] Defoe was particularly taken with the merchants who rose to prominence with the expansion of trade and manufacturing during his lifetime (1660-1731), many of whom he regarded as worthy aspirants to genteel status, a claim rooted in one's style of living.[712]

One reason merchant material culture is often overlooked is the lingering assumption that the material culture of the gentry is of more significance. Grassby has written extensively about the early modern business community in England yet displays this tendency when he surmises that '[i]n contrast to the gentry merchants had a marginal interest in interior decoration and were less inclined to express their status through domestic artefacts. Their taste was usually conformist, functional and unrefined.'[713] Writing of a group of eighteenth-

708 H. R. French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England, 1600-1750* (Oxford, 2007), 142; Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989). 172, 200-208; Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), 69, particularly the following: 'the surviving evidence of Georgian extravagance can be somewhat misleading, not because it is false, but because it misrepresents the relative importance of conspicuous consumption among the upper classes, and more commonplace but cumulatively no less significant consumer taste among the middle classes.'

709 The most prominent examples being: Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*; Overton et al. *Production and Consumption*; Judith Welford, 'Functional Goods and Fancies: The Production and Consumption of Consumer Goods in Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Durham c. 1680-1780', Durham University PhD thesis (2010), the latter of which only contains three merchants in its dataset.

710 Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Classes: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, 1989).

711 William Harrison, 'Of the Manner and Building and Furniture of Our Houses', in Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1587), Book II, Ch. 12, 188. Emphasis added.

712 Michael Shinagel, *Daniel Defoe and Middle-Class Gentility* (London, 1968), 216-217.

713 Richard Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1995), 341.

century London merchants, Hancock similarly argues that despite their 'great wealth' and political influence, their non-gentry status left them 'marginal figures'. 'Frustrated in their desires', they 'lacked social status' and it was only through a 'polite, industrious, and moral improvement program' that they moved from the 'periphery to the centre of society' and achieved 'assent into the realm of the gentlemen'.[714] In his study of sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Durham, James shares the perspective of Hancock and Grassby, writing how the 'Newcastle men', rich from the coal trade, bought landed estates to merge with the landed class.[715]

A case can be made that these perceptions lead back to the cultural counterrevolution of the mid-nineteenth century. This harked back to earlier times and challenged the spirit of aggressive capitalism, celebrating the qualities of harmony, stability and order in society rather than competition, idealising rural life in contrast to urban living. The outcome was the consolidation of a '"gentrified" bourgeois culture' and the promotion of aristocratic values and style of life.[716] An example of the hostility and suspicion many held towards wealth derived from commerce can be seen in the novels of Jane Austen. Her books pay due attention to 'the assault on gentility' by the 'new mercantile middle class' yet, tellingly, few of her major characters are involved in trade; for those that are, the word 'trade' has 'a ring that seems to require apology'.[717] Yet while many early modern commentators shared these later suspicions of trade and merchants, others realised England's prosperity rested on commercial expansion, and particularly after 1660 a far more positive image of trade emerged.[718] So much so that McCloskey has recently claimed the seventeenth and eighteenth century reappraisal of business and its bourgeois practitioners was so dramatic that it created the pro-business mentality that made the industrial revolution possible.[719]

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714 David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), 279, 281-5, 289-292, 347.

715 Mervyn James, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society: a Study of Society, Politics and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1974), 68-69, 89-90. Cf. A. T. Brown, *Rural Society and Economic Change in County Durham: Recession and Recovery, c.1400-1640* (Woodbridge, 2015), Ch.5 which argues that Newcastle merchants bought property more as a business investment than in mimicry of the landed gentry.

716 Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (London, 1981), 6-10, 46-48.

717 Juliet McMaster, 'Class', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, 2nd edition, eds. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge, 2011), 119-120; Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (London 2014; first published 1813), 137: Mr Gardiner was 'gentlemanlike man' and 'The Netherfield ladies would have had difficulty in believing that a man who lived by trade, and within view of his own warehouses, could have been so well bred and agreeable'.

718 Paul Slack, 'The Politics of Consumption and England's Happiness in the Later Seventeenth Century', *EHR*, 122, 497 (2007), 609-631; Paul Slack 'Material Progress and the Challenge of Affluence in Seventeenth-Century England', *EcHR*, 62, 3 (2009), 576-603.

719 Deidre McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (Chicago, 2010).

Given these arguments, the material culture of merchant households clearly warrants analysis on its own terms, free from the assumption that all wealthy merchants aspired to be part of the gentry. By providing this research, the aim here is not to challenge the suggestion that social assimilation took place as merchants married into the gentry. But this only applies to a small proportion of merchants. To gain a more rounded picture of how urban material culture developed in towns such as Newcastle we need to appraise merchants through the internal logic of the evidence, rather than from the viewpoint that their material culture was inherently inferior to that of other social groups. That early modern merchants had an important role in the development of material culture in Europe has recently been highlighted in a collection of essays on the subject. The general conclusion sees 'the rise of the urban merchant and artisan class and their consumer power as one of the single most defining characteristics of the period and its materiality', with urban merchants noted for their keenness to 'adopt new modes of domestic life and material display within the home'.[720] This chapter puts forward Newcastle as a valuable addition to this discussion, showing how the development of urban living in a single English town was part of something taking place on a European scale.

5.2 Probate inventories and domestic wealth

The key source used in this chapter is the probate inventory. This document was granted by the probate courts upon death and lists all moveable assets belonging to the deceased. In total 126 probate inventories exist for Newcastle merchants dating to the years 1660-1750, with most stemming from 1660-1700 and only a few after 1720. The main aim here is to provide a detailed analysis of the items listed in these documents; but ahead of this the monetary value of household goods will be used a basis for compassion across the dataset. Doing so will uncover the hierarchical nature of the merchant community displayed in terms of households wealth.[721]

As each item appraised in a probate inventory is usually given a specific valuation this task is seemingly straightforward. However, as only debts owing to rather than by the deceased were required to be included, any attempt to establish the value of the deceased

720 Catherine Richardson et al., eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York, 2017), 22; Chris King, 'Domestic Buildings: Understanding Houses and Society', in *Routledge Handbook of Material Culture*, eds. Richardson et al., 121.

721 All documents giving the occupation of the deceased as 'merchant' have been crosschecked with merchant guild records listing members and included for analysis. See above, Chapter One 26.

person's estate is severely hampered. One potential solution is to use probate accounts which list all debts owed. Unfortunately the survival rate of these documents is not high and just one has come to light for a Newcastle merchant. How typical it is may be questioned, but it is still useful for giving some idea of how outstanding debts could alter the fortunes of a deceased merchant's estate. The account dates from 1670 and shows the estate of William Procter was initially valued at a healthy £143 12s 7d, once the debts he was owned were collected. Then came the deductions: £3 for shop rent, £178 in outstanding debts, £5 for his funeral, £4 to the 'Docter and Chirugin for their advise & charges … dureing his Sicknes', a further £7 10s to a Newcastle apothecary for 'the physicke' he provided and, finally, £5 10s for the various administrative charges of the court.[722] Totalling £203, these deductions quickly sent the estate into debt. Outstanding rent, personal debt, medical bills, funeral expenses—all were common liabilities and many other estates seemingly in credit from the probate inventory would have ended up in debt following their deduction.

As the example of William Proctor makes clear, ascertaining overall wealth from inventories is difficult to do accurately unless accompanying probate accounts are available. As these are scarce, a workaround is needed. The solution favoured here is to use 'domestic wealth' as an indicator of overall household wealth. Domestic wealth is calculated by adding together the value of all household goods to give a total that excludes debts, merchandise, shipping, ready cash and apparel.[723] Domestic wealth cannot be considered a direct substitute for overall wealth, but it should be remembered that the church courts used worth in goods (after debts owing and owed had been subtracted) as the standard measure of a witness's wealth.[724] Furthermore, studies that use the value of household goods as an indicator of overall wealth show that to some degree the consumption hierarchy did indeed reflect the social hierarchy. For example, in Levine and Wrightson's study of Whickham parish, located a few miles to the south of Newcastle, they found three broad 'consumption groups' emerged from the late seventeenth century probate inventories they examined; one representing the minor gentry and substantial farmers with household goods averaging £20; a second comprising of lesser yeomen with goods to the value of £6-£13, and a final group of

722DUL, DPR/I/1/1670/P17.

723 It may be objected that apparel and ready cash were part of domestic wealth. Unfortunately most inventories lump these together as 'purse and apparel', which normally would not be too problematic to include in domestic wealth calculations, but as merchants tended to have more ready money than others, including these often sizeable amounts would skew results and for this reason have been omitted.

724 Alexandra Shepard and Judith Spicksley, 'Worth, Age, and Social Status in Early Modern England', *EHR*, 64, 2 (2011), 502.

labourers and widows whose household goods were valued under £5.[725] Overton et al. similarly found the propensity to own the latest goods increased with the value of household furnishings while French's study of parish and borough officeholders and non-officeholders notes the former tended to own 'new' items of furniture as well as having almost twice the value of household goods as the latter, a disparity he attributes to the difference in accumulated material wealth between the two groups.[726] These studies also show the value of household goods can give a reasonably good impression of living standards, something we shall return to later.[727]

To give an overview of the data for the Newcastle merchants, Table 5.1 shows the proportion of households across seven domestic wealth categories, labelled A-G. Although most households are in Group B, there is a fairly broad spread across the seven groups, demonstrating that within the merchant community there was a hierarchy reflected in the ownership of material goods. Group A poses a slight problem as we cannot say for certain why these inventories list no domestic goods; that is, whether the deceased merchant had lived in the parental home, lodged in a furnished room, or disposed of his goods prior to death.

Table 5.1: Merchant households in each domestic wealth group

	Domestic wealth group						
	(A) £0	**(B) £1-25**	**(C) £26-50**	**(D) £51-75**	**(E) £76-100**	**(F) £101-125**	**(G) £126+**
Households in group (N)	12	28	22	15	17	12	20
Households as proportion of whole (%)	9.5	22.2	17.5	11.9	13.5	9.5	15.9

Source: Probate inventory dataset

Some Group A inventories likely belong to merchants who died at an early stage in the lifecycle; young men who did not live long enough to acquire the worldly goods that marriage, inheritance or a successful career provided. James Shafto serves as an example of the former. James died in 1672 when he was around twenty-nine years old. Following a ten-

725 David Levine and Keith Wrightson, *The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham 1560-1765* (Oxford, 1991), 234.

726 Overton et al. *Production and Consumption*, 147-151; French, *Middle Sort*, 158; Craig Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness: Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2011), 167 similarly finds 'that the value of household goods was generally related to an individual's financial credit, as it was this which enabled them to purchase more consumer goods'.

727 Levine and Wrightson, *Whickham*, 89; Tom Arkell, 'Interpreting Probate Inventories', in *When Death do us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, eds. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford, 2000), 6-8.

year apprenticeship, he had been admitted to the Merchant Adventurers in 1669, meaning he was only three years into his working life when he died.[728] Despite his brief career, in his will James passed on a house in High Friar Chair, a 'Coffee house', rights in a coal lease, a close, interests in some 'glasse houses' and a total of £158 in cash. But, by way of household goods, his inventory only lists purse, apparel and a horse.[729] Clearly he was not without assets, and this cautions us against assuming a lack of worldly goods indicates an absence of wealth. Nothing in James' will suggests he was married or had any children. Combined with the lack of household goods, this may indicate he lived in rented rooms or an apartment. As explained in Chapter Four, lodging does not necessarily indicate the individual was unable to afford his own household. In County Durham lodging rooms were a feature of several gentry houses and advertisements placed in the *Newcastle Courant* further show that lodgings and apartments for genteel occupants were part of urban living in Newcastle.[730] Other Group A inventories suggest the deceased merchant was a lodger at the time of his death. George Dobson's inventory, for instance, totals £94 18s 10d and besides 'purse and wearing apparel' only lists the merchandise he owed.[731] In a similar manner, other than his purse and apparel, the inventory of Michael Dent only lists a few debts he was owned along with a thirty-second share in a ship.[732]

Turning to the households in the other groups, comparing domestic wealth valuations to other locations will give some idea of scale. At just £11, the lowest mean valuation of domestic goods in Weatherill's study covering the period 1660-1725 is for Cumbria, notably less than the northwest Midlands (£17), Cambridgeshire (£19), the northeast (£20), northwest (£23), Hampshire (£27), London (£30) and east Kent (£38).[733] Table 5.1 shows that the largest of the seven categories was Group B (22.2 percent) whose households had a domestic wealth of between £1 and £25, a range containing Weatherill's eight-region average of £23. But it is striking how many Newcastle merchants belong to the higher wealth categories, making those in groups D to G stand out in a national context as having particularly well-appointed domestic interiors. Focussing on the Newcastle and Durham region, it will be recalled that the parish gentry of Whickham generally had household goods to the value of £20, and is notable how many Newcastle merchant households exceeded this figure. The

728 F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts from the Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Surtees Society vol. 101 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1899). 283; DUL, DPR/I/1/1672/S7/1-2.
729 DUL, DPR/I/1/1672/S7/3-4. High Friar Chair was a lane in Ficket Tower.
730 Adrian Green 'Houses and Households in County Durham and Newcastle c.1570-1730' Durham University PhD Thesis (2000), 261, 265. Poorer lodgings did exist but they tended not to be advertised in newspapers.
731 DUL, DRP/I/1/1671/D3/2.
732 DUL, DPR/I/1/1694/D5/1.
733 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 46 Table 3.2.

heightened consumer demand associated with the urban setting doubtless contributed to this disparity. Indeed, Welford confirms that, in the period 1680-1723, four fifths of the region's urban households had up to £40 worth of goods whilst three-quarters of non-urban homes had items totalling no more than £20.[734] These figures also confirm that the more affluent merchant households of Newcastle really did enjoy higher standards of living than other urban households in the area, as Table 5.1 shows that just over half had furnishings worth £51 and over. Comparing Newcastle merchant households to gentry households in Weatherill's broad study that covers England as a whole is also helpful. According to Weatherill, in the period 1675-1725 the average gentry household contained £55 worth of goods.[735] Comparing this figure to the data in Table 5.1 it can be seen that at least 39 per cent of merchant households, represented by groups E-G, exceeded this amount. The items that were most commonly owned by merchant households will be considered in detail in the rest of the chapter. But it is worth noting here that in terms of overall valuation, a significant proportion of Newcastle merchant households exceeded the gentry, thereby marking them out for their contribution to the development of material culture in the period under study.

Though for the slightly earlier period 1626-1642, it is useful to note that Heley calculates the average tradesman's house in Newcastle contained goods totalling just under £27, though some had significantly less, particularly the keelmen whose homes usually had goods totalling just over £5.[736] In terms of accessing the profits of coal, the Hostmen and keelmen stood at opposite ends of the spectrum. Keelmen were 'servants' of the Hostmen and the social gap that separated them from their employers was reflected in their lower standards of living.[737] But the keelmen were not the poorest group in Newcastle. The fact they reached the £5 threshold to qualify for probate distinguishes them from the least affluent, the 'vast, quasi-proletarian multitude of the poor' constituting 76 percent of the town population in the 1660s.[738] Overall we can say that compared to other occupational groups, merchant households tended to have higher domestic wealth valuations. At the same time, domestic wealth varied considerably within the merchant community pointing to a hierarchy that was articulated and reinforced through the ownership of material goods.

734 Welford, 'Functional Goods', 243.
735 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 168.
736 Gwendolynn Heley, 'The Material Culture of the Tradesmen of Newcastle upon Tyne 1545-1642: The Durham Probate Record Evidence', Durham University PhD thesis (2009), 152, Table 5.3.
737 D. J. Rowe, 'The Keelmen of Tyneside', *History Today*, 19, 4 (1969), 248-254; Joseph M. Fewster, *The Keelmen of Tyneside: Labour Organisation and Conflict in the North-East Coal Industry* (Woodbridge, 2011), 21.
738 Joyce Ellis, 'A Dynamic Society: Social Relations in Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1660-1760', in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1984), 197.

5.3 Living standards

Clearly there existed much variation in the domestic wealth of Newcastle merchant households. This signifies very different experiences of the 'consumer revolution' and indicates that not all merchant households adhered to the wider bourgeois material culture. Even for those that did, they engaged with it in varying degrees. However, that a significant proportion of Newcastle merchant households *did* engage with the bourgeois material culture seems clear when domestic wealth totals are compared to the aforementioned studies that cover both England as a whole and Newcastle as a town. Exploring this further, this section looks more closely at the household goods that make up domestic wealth totals and considers how ownership varied throughout the merchant community, underlining the fact that the consumption of material culture varied within the merchant community. Twenty-one items of furniture have been selected for analysis, displayed in Table 5.2. The domestic wealth groups used previously have been retained, only grouped into three larger categories, denoting low domestic wealth (LDW), medium domestic wealth (MDW) and high domestic wealth (HDW). For each item the proportion of inventories listing them is given along with the average number. For example, 70 percent of LDW households owned mirrors; those that did usually had between one and two (the mean number owned being 1.5). For the HDW group, 90.6 percent of households owned mirrors but they tended to have between two and three.

Many of the items listed were valued for reasons of comfort. Upholstered chairs, for example, became increasingly common during the seventeenth century and offered a softer sitting surface than plain wooden chairs, especially when the covering secured padding to the seat.[739] Leather had long been used to cover chair seats and was particularly popular for dining chairs as it was easy to keep clean.[740] Both offered superior comfort to plain wooden chairs, although cushions could be used to make these more yielding. Cane chairs became more popular after the Restoration and these required cushions by design.[741]

Table 5.2: Merchant ownership of household furniture

739 Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland* (New Haven and London, 1978), 217. With thrum chairs, the 'thrum' is a thread projecting from a woven surface or a tassel designed to adorn fabrics. See: *OED*, s.v. 'thrum'.
740 Ibid., 222.
741 Ibid., 180, 202, 284.

Item	Low domestic wealth £1-50 (LDW)		Medium domestic wealth £51-£100 (MDW)		High domestic wealth £101+ (HDW)	
	Inventories listing item (%)	Mean number owned	Inventories listing item (%)	Mean number owned	Inventories listing item (%)	Mean number owned
Hangings	4.0 (2)*	2	21.9 (7)	1.6	28.1 (9)	1.6
Cushions	42.0 (21)	5.7	65.6 (21)	6.9	75.0 (24)	9.9
Window curtains	34.0 (17)	3.1	68.7 (22)	4.7	81.3 (26)	4.5
Iron chimneys	18.0 (9)	2.7	34.4 (11)	2.6	34.4 (11)	1.7
Mirrors	70.0 (35)	1.5	93.8 (30)	1.9	90.6 (29)	2.6
Chests of drawers**	66.0 (33)	1.4	93.7 (30)	1.4	87.5 (28)	1.9
Dressers	10.0 (5)	1.6	18.8 (6)	1.5	25.0 (8)	1.5
Cupboards	36.0 (18)	1.3	43.8 (14)	2	65.6 (21)	2.2
Tables	84.0 (42)	3.6	96.9 (31)	3.8	96.9 (31)	5.8
Spanish tables	6.0 (3)	1.7	12.5 (4)	3	15.6 (4)	4
Oval tables***	20.0 (10)	1	31.3 (10)	1.2	31.3 (10)	1.5
Desks	22.0 (11)	1.2	18.8 (6)	1.6	40.6 (13)	1
Chairs	78.0 (39)	11.7	90.6 (29)	12	96.9 (31)	19.1
Cane chairs	2.0 (1)	9	21.8 (7)	14.7	15.6 (5)	12
Couch chairs	2.0 (1)	1	6.2 (2)	1.5	6.3 (2)	1
Leather chairs	42.0 (21)	7.9	56.3 (18)	8.1	53.1 (17)	12.2
Armed chairs	14.0 (7)	1.4	12.5 (4)	1.5	31.3 (10)	2
Stools	44.0 (22)	5.2	68.8 (22)	5.2	68.8 (22)	6
Buffet stools	2.0 (1)	3	18.8 (6)	4.3	15.6 (5)	3.8
Joined stools	10.0 (5)	3.6	18.8 (6)	5.8	31.3 (10)	5.7
Upholstered chairs	42.0 (14)	9.8	62.5 (20)	12.6	68.8 (22)	11.9

Source: Probate inventory dataset
* All bracketed figures give the number of households containing each item
** Includes 'cases of drawers'
*** Includes round tables

This type of chair was fairly unusual in LDW households, being mostly a feature of the higher wealth groups, and it is likely that some of the cushions more frequently found in these households were used for cane chairs. Armed chairs were more than twice as common in HDW households as they were in either of the other groups. These offered the sitter further comfort by providing support for the arms. Couch chairs were few and far between—just five in the whole sample.

The distinction between couches, day-beds and sofas is not exact, though they had a shared purpose in being pieces of furniture primarily for reclining.[742] More basic seating was provided by stools which were common to all households. Joined stools served as tables as well as seats; being portable they could be easily stored away until needed. They were more

742 Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards, *The Dictionary of English Furniture: From the Middle Ages to the Late Georgian Period* 2nd ed., vol. 2 (London, 1954), 134.

than three times as common in HDW as LDW households and tended to be owned in greater quantities too.[743] Buffet stools were low stools or footstools and mainly a feature of MDW and HDW households. Other items of furniture offered more convenient ways of storing possessions. Chests of drawers came in to fashion towards the end of the seventeenth century and provided a more practical way of storing items than placing them in chests, as to reach something at the bottom of a chest it was necessary to lift out all the items lying above. Originally drawers were fitted at the bottom of the chest to mitigate this difficulty and eventually more tiers of drawers were added until the chest became a chest of drawers.[744] This space saving innovation was particularly useful as households acquired more goods. They were widely owned, especially in the higher wealth groups. The likelihood of owning a dresser increased with domestic wealth. In medieval times dressers usually had shelving for display purposes but towards the mid-seventeenth century this disappeared, only to be revived early in the eighteenth century. The dressers listed in Table 5.2 were probably those typically found in halls and parlours in the latter half of the seventeenth century; that is, rectangular pieces of furniture with drawers but no shelving.[745]

The distinction between dressers and cupboards was never firmly drawn, though as inventories list them separately, so too does Table 5.2. Cup-boards were originally intended as places to display vessels and plate. As the lower section eventually became enclosed with a door, the term 'cupboard' as we understand it came into use.[746] Cupboards came in a variety of forms and we cannot be sure which type an inventory is describing. Generally they were receptacles enclosed by doors with drawers to the lower portion, which would have been used for storage.[747] Four inventories also list livery cupboards, which were ventilated and used for storing food.[748] Corner cupboards were not widely owned, just two inventories list them.[749] This type of cupboard only came in to general use in the reign of William and Mary. They were mainly used to keep china in, along with the highly prized tea service.[750] Likely this was how the two merchant households used their corner cupboards as both inventories list tea-making paraphernalia. Tables were the most commonly listed item in each group, with households usually having between three and five. A few households in each wealth group

743 Percy Macquoid, *A History of English Furniture* (London, 1988), 37.
744 Thornton, *Interior Decoration*, 294-295.
745 Macquoid and Edwards, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 218.
746 Thornton, *Interior Decoration*, 231-233.
747 Macquoid and Edwards, *Dictionary*, vol.2, 156-162.
748DUL, DPR/I/1/1672/C19/2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/D3/2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1661/W5/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/ 1664/W3/6; Macquoid and Edwards, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 183-188.
749 DUL, DPR/I/1/ 1731/B8/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/ 1726/H2/1.
750 Macquoid and Edwards, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 175.

owned Spanish tables. These were inexpensive portable affairs with hinged trestle-like legs that could be folded out and secured with iron hooks.[751] Oval and round tables were more aesthetically pleasing, and though owned more widely by higher domestic wealth groups, most households only contained one or two, significantly fewer than plain tables.

Window curtains added to domestic comfort by keeping drafts to a minimum and affording a degree of privacy to urban living. Likely this explains the fact that in the northeast 21 percent of urban households had curtains compared to just 5 percent of those in rural areas.[752] Table 5.2 shows ownership is positively correlated with domestic wealth, although all wealth groups had rates in excess of this regional average. Newcastle was the region's largest urban centre and it seems probable that window curtains were valued as a cheap solution to the loss of privacy that accompanies cramped urban living. Nevertheless, despite the practicalities of window curtains, they were decorative items that displayed taste to the outside world.[753] Some inventories appraise goods in rooms described as 'Blew', 'Yellow', 'Green' or 'Red', and likely this indicates rooms with window curtains and seat coverings in matching colours.[754] There was no utility to having matching colour schemes. Furnishing rooms in this manner was about making them pleasing to the eye, creating a certain 'feel' that accorded with individual taste. This was further achieved with hangings. Hangings were more favoured by the higher wealth groups and could be worth considerable sums. Thomas Jenison's 1676 inventory lists a tapestry hanging in his dining room which, along with a chimney piece, was valued at £9.[755] Another household contained a suite of 'stitch hangings' valued close to £5.[756] Tapestry hangings were expensive luxuries at this time and many households settled for cheaper painted cloth imitations; leather hangings were also popular, as were those made from damask or calico.[757] Examples of these cheaper hangings can be seen in Jonathan Roddam's 1712 inventory which lists calico hangings valued at £1 along with a 'suite of blew China hangings stript with druggett' worth 15s and some paper hangings valued at 1s.[758] Thomas Harle's household had three sets of paper hangings which, like tapestries, were mounted onto canvas or linen that was stretched between the dado and

751 Thornton, *Interior Decoration*, 226.

752 Lorna Scammell, 'Was the North-East Different from other Areas? The Property of Everyday Consumption in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', in *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*, eds. Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot, 2004), 17, Table 2.3.

753 Overton et al. *Production and Consumption*, 112-113.

754 Macquoid and Edwards, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 256. For such rooms see, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1700/B9/3-4; DUL, DPR/I/1/1731/B8/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1696/M9/2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1680/M13/1.

755 DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/J2/1. His inventory also lists hangings in the parlour worth 40s and another set of danix hangings in the 'Little Parlour'.

756 DUL, DPR/I/1/1703/M4/3-4. The hangings were valued at £5 but this included some 'matts'.

757 Macquoid and Edwards, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 253-255.

758 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5.

cornice.[759] Price wise, paper hangings were within the reach of most merchant households and before pasted paper became the norm moveable textiles and paper hangings were prized as decorative items used to brighten rooms.

Heating rooms provided further comfort. Using probate inventories to estimate how many rooms were heated is not entirely straightforward, as though Table 5.2 shows how many inventories list iron chimneys, it is likely that these were portable fire-grates or fire-pans rather than fixed iron flues, as might be imagined.[760] Nevertheless, their presence signifies the provision of heating, especially when appraised alongside a pair of tongs, a fire shovel and a porr (a fire poker).[761]

Looking beyond the goods listed in Table 5.2, pictures were a popular addition to merchant households. Just over 32 percent of inventories listing pictures count between one and four, though 31 percent record nine or more, signifying larger collections were not unusual. Households with only a few pictures tended to display them in the same room, usually the hall, which would have maximised the visual impact and created more of a spectacle to stand and admire. Larger collections tended to be dispersed throughout the house, such as that listed in the inventory of Jonathan Roddam. Fifty-eight prints and pictures were dotted about his house. In the passage there was a picture of the 'Goddesses', two landscapes and a 'fruit piece'; on the staircase hung another landscape along with portraits of Charles II, the Duke and Duchess of York, two 'prospects of London' and a 'small piece called Death head'. In the hall were portraits of Jonathan and his wife Jane; others were displayed in the 'Best Chamber' and 'Blew Room'.[762] Only a few other inventories describe the content of pictures. These include that of James Brankston, which lists two 'family pictures' in the hall, and that of John Allen which describes five pictures 'called Senses'.[763] Only a small number of pictures are given a valuation, suggesting that, on the whole, they were not worth a huge amount. Of those given a valuation, at the higher end John Wilkinson had six valued at £6; more commonly pictures were worth significantly less, usually from several shillings to a few pence.[764]

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759 DUL, DPR/I/1/1726/H2/1; Macquoid and Edwards, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 255-256.
760 *OED*, s.v. 'Chimney'.
761 DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/N2/1.
762 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5. Interestingly, there was a 'Dutch peice' in his hall and another 'large Dutch peice' in the 'passage', further underlining the connection to the Netherlands noted below in relation to his Dutch books.
763 DUL, DPR/I/1/1731/B8/1-2; DUL, DPR/l/1/1679/A3/2.
764 DUL, DPR/I/1/1701/W13/2.

Clocks and silverware generally had a higher individual valuation than most other items of furniture and were fairly widely owned.[765] Clocks were more commonly owned by Group G households, 50 percent of whom had one compared to 18.5 percent of those in Group B. Overall, 27 percent of households contained a clock, a proportion matching Weatherill's figure for her group of dealing trades but some way behind the gentry, just over half of whom owned one.[766] Before ownership became widespread in the later eighteenth century, having a clock hanging in the home was a sign of status, something evident in the location of clocks within merchant households.[767] Twenty-eight inventories listing clocks also give the room in which they were found, and in 78.6 percent of cases this was the hall. (One clock was in a kitchen, another on a staircase and the rest in various other 'chambers'.) Although the function of the hall changed during the early modern period, its significance as a space to demonstrate status continued past the mid-seventeenth century, especially in 'hallhouses' where the hall retained its function as a symbolic space to convey family status, as in Bristol's merchant houses.[768] The tendency for Newcastle merchant households to keep clocks in the hall may point to similar attempts to display wealth and status, something suggested by the frequency with which pictures, another indicator of taste and style, to be hung in the hall. This is not to overlook the practical benefit of having a clock. Clock time offered a language for coordinating social relations and for merchants in particular this was useful for planning their days around shipping, tides and, above all, the activities of others.[769]

Silver was an 'essential indicator' of status during the early modern period, prized for its decorative qualities as well as its high value.[770] Merchants often used silver to store wealth in as it could easily be turned into cash or used as security for commercial ventures or for insurance liabilities.[771] The amount of silver varied a good deal between households. The lowest valuation is 16s and the highest just over £102, the median a more modest £17. Tankards, spoons, bowls, wine cups, porringers, cans, saltcellars and inkhorns were the most

765 The most valuable were both estimated to be worth £5, though these were not exceptional as others were worth £4 10s and £3. The least valuable clock was deemed to be worth considerably less, just 13s 4d. See: DUL, DPR/I/1/1/1701/W13/2; DUL, DPR/I/11/1712/R20/3-5; DUL, DP/I/11/1700/B9/3-4; DUL, DPR/I/1/1/ 1670/M2/2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1/1704/M6/3.

766 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 184 Table 8.2.

767 Ibid.

768 Roger Leech, 'The Symbolic Hall: Historical Context and Merchant Culture in the Early Modern City', *Vernacular Architecture*, 31, 1 (2000), 1-10; see also Chapter Four above.

769 John Smith, *Horological Dialogues* (London, 1675), 114 explains how clocks were useful for finding the hour of full tide at any port.

770 Philippa Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London, 1990), Ch. 2, quote 47.

771 Richard Grassby, 'English Merchant Capital in the Late Seventeenth Century. The Composition of Business Fortunes', *P&P*, 46 (1970), 90.

commonly owned silver items. Several merchants had silver watches; other households had silver teapots and sugar dishes.[772]

Overall, the furniture owned by Newcastle merchant households tells us that they valued some items for reasons of practicality and convenience: tables, chests of drawers, dressers, chairs and the like. Others were valued for reasons of comfort and these include covered chairs, armed chairs, cushions, window curtains and hangings. Although some items of furniture were fairly common to all households, if we compare the likelihood of ownership to domestic wealth, we see that whilst the mean number of a particular item owned was often greater in HDW households, the chance of ownership did not simply increase with domestic wealth. Leather chairs, mirrors and chests of drawers were more frequently found in MDW than HDW households for example. This tells us that the propensity to own a certain item was not purely a matter of wealth. Each household had its own requirements and values when it came to furnishing the interior. Rather than ownership following a simple pattern personal choice creates a more complex picture.

Another conclusion to draw from the data is that merchant households generally enjoyed high living standards compared to Newcastle as a whole. Whether these standards rose through the period is difficult to chart precisely as only a limited number of inventories date after 1700. Nevertheless, some items listed in Table 5.2 clearly became more common after 1700, most notably armchairs, hangings and window curtains. Cane chairs were rare before 1680, with only 9 percent of inventories listing them in the 1690s. In contrast, just over half of eighteenth-century inventories record them. Japanned leafed tables, walnut elbow chairs, walnut tables, barometers and corner cupboards all appear first in the eighteenth century. Clocks were another item more popular after 1700; 53 percent of eighteenth-century inventories list them compared to around a quarter of those dating from the seventeenth century. After 1700 merchant households were also more likely to have pictures on display. Between 1660 and the 1690s around 40-50 percent of inventories list them, after 1700 the figure rises to 84 percent, making them more popular in merchant houses than was generally the case amongst the region's urban middling sort.[773] When it came to owning things like chests of drawers, round tables, cushions, mirrors, leather chairs and basic tables and chairs, there was much continuity across the period. Levels of domestic comfort were, however, clearly rising, and the increasing popularity of things like clocks, pictures, walnut furniture, corner cupboards, window curtains, armchairs and so on demonstrates that by the eighteenth

772 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1703/B8/3; DUL, DPR/I/1/1670/C14/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1661/W5/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1664/P9/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1664/W3/6; DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/S19/1.

773 Welford, 'Functional Goods', 268.

century Newcastle merchant households were acquiring many of the goods associated with the wider urban bourgeois culture. New sensibilities of polite and refined society emphasised the importance of appearance and speech, but material goods, and the resources to acquire them, were vital for differentiating the middling sorts from their poorer neighbours.[774]

Further evidence that some merchant households were assuming new manners can be seen with knives and forks. Throughout the seventeenth century and beyond the most widely used item of cutlery was the spoon. Knives and forks were not commonly used for eating before the mid-eighteenth century; even then they were mostly found in the homes of the gentry, or at most those of the high status trades. In Weatherill's study of the period 1660-1760, just 4 percent of inventories record knives and forks.[775] Only four merchant inventories list them, all dating after 1700. The most extensive collection included six knives and forks 'with Ivory hefts tipt with silver' along with six 'new box hefted knives & a ½ dozen Forks' and a further '½ dozen ordinary box hefted knives & ½ dozen Forks', all kept in a closet in the 'Best Chamber', clearly attesting to their special status.[776] Had more eighteenth-century inventories survived other examples of using knives and forks for eating would surely come to light. The four cases we do have are still significant though, as they show merchant households adopting the very latest fashions associated with the consumption of food, demonstrating how receptive they were to changing manners.

Taken together, the evidence discussed so far challenges Grassby who argues that seventeenth-century merchant households were simple and functional in their furnishings, with the value of their domestic goods changing little over the course of the century.[777] Judging by the Newcastle evidence the opposite was true: merchant households helped introduce the latest styles of living to the town, clearly attesting to their interest in material possessions.

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774 Jon Stobart and Alastair Owens, introduction to *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900*, eds. John Stobart and Owen Owens (Aldershot, 2000), 8-9; Jon Stobart, 'Who Were the Urban Gentry? Social Elites in an English Provincial Town, c.1680-1760', *Continuity and Change*, 26, 1 (2011), 89-112 esp. 97-99.

775 Barrie Trinder and Jeff Cox, *Yeomen and Colliers in Telford* (London and Chichester, 1990), 107; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 8, 168 Table 8.1.

776 DUL, DPR/I/1/1700/B9; DUL, DPR/I/1/1706/D8; DUL, DPR/I/1/1731/B8; DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5.

777 Grassby, *Business Community*, Ch. 11. It is unclear what evidence leads Grassby to this conclusion. He references Weatherill's study but her data hardly describes such a scenario. Cf. David Howarth, 'Merchants and Diplomats: New Patrons of the Decorative Arts in Seventeenth-Century England', *Furniture History*, 20 (1984), 10-17. In contrast to Grassby, Howarth suggests that rather than the gentry, it was often merchants and diplomats who served as the main agents for change in the decorative arts, something they achieved by relying on their instincts as entrepreneurs to capitalise on the novelties they encountered abroad.

5.4 Acquiring household goods

One issue not addressed so far is how households acquired furnishings in the first place. Consumption was cyclical in nature, with goods passing from one generation to the next or purchased second-hand, often from a deceased person's estate.[778] Newcastle acquired its first newspaper in 1711 with the *Newcastle Courant* and occasionally advertisements were run to alert readers to sales of second-hand household goods held locally.[779] More affluent households could make use of local craftsmen who used the newspaper to promote their wares. In 1729 Richard Wilkinson, a Newcastle 'Joyner', was offering 'all sorts of Book-Cases, and Desks, Chests of Drawers, and Dressing-Tables, Screen-Tables, and Tea-Tables' as 'reasonable Prices'.[780] In 1740 John Richardson, a 'CABINET *and* CHAIR-MAKER *from* London' then living in Durham, was similarly producing a range of chairs, bookcases, cabinets, tables, tea-chests, drawers and 'all other Sorts of Goods in Mahogany and Walnut' 'as fashionable' as those in London.[781] Given the cost of such furniture, most customers would have been well-to-do middling households in a position to keep up with the latest London trends. Tea-drinking was becoming popular amongst these families in the early eighteenth century and the paraphernalia used to prepare and serve the drink was sold in Newcastle. 'Just arrived from London', ran one advertisement from 1738, 'A Large Quantity of all Sorts of CHINA-WARE' including 'Complete Sets for Tea-Tables.'[782] By this time middling households were also placing greater emphasis on cleanliness. Dining tables were often covered with linen and an assortment of handkerchiefs and towels were provided for diners, all of which could be bought in Newcastle.[783]

Buying household goods from local shops and craftsmen was one option but for many families furnishing the home was done with the help of relatives. Analysing Newcastle merchant wills provides plenty of evidence that young couples set up their own households with goods bequeathed to them by relatives. Bequests often simply state that 'all household Goods' were to pass to the surviving spouse or one or more children, though occasionally items—most of which appear in Table 5.2—are singled out for specific recipients.[784] For example, Samuel Ellison's father left him 'all and every [of] the Tables[,] Cupboards and

778 Adrian Green, 'Consumption and Material Culture' in *A Social History of England, 1500-1750*, ed. Keith Wrightson (Cambridge, 2017), 242-266.
779 See, for example, *NC* no. 242 Feb. 6, 1725; *NC* no. 256 Mar. 21, 1730; *NC* no. 171 Aug. 3, 1728.
780 *NC* no. 215 June 7, 1729.
781 *NC* no. 774 Feb. 25, 1740; *NC* no. 200 Feb. 22, 1729.
782 *NC* no. 684 June 3, 1738.
783 *NC* no. 496 Oct. 26, 1734.
784 DUL, DPR/I/1/1703/M4/1-2.

Presses[,] Bedsteads and Chaires' in his house.[785] From her father, Elizabeth Anderson received a set of 'green sewed Curtaines & Vallance' and another set in red.[786] George Dobson left each of his grandsons an iron chimney and bedstead, along with a 'Cuppord' for one and a 'long Table' for the other.[787] Besides a set of hangings, some 'Fire Barrs[,] Grates and Chimneys' were received by Jonathan Hutchinson from his father.[788] Alice Jennison was left 'two suites of Tapistrie Hangings' by her father, one of which he had kept in the dining room, the other in the parlour.[789] Doubtless many other items listed in Table 5.2 were acquired in a similar manner. Passing goods between generations imparted a sentimental value on them that cannot be quantified but is evident in the wills. For example, Margaret Milburne left her eldest son some household possessions and described them as those 'w^{ch} my deare husband left me'. Obviously she still associated them with her deceased husband and no doubt her son connected them to his father.[790] Peter Maddison left his wife all his household goods and added that after her death they were to pass to his daughters Anne and Elizabeth; whatever goods they each received, they would have been forever linked to their parents.[791]

Silverware was often of high value but when bequeathed in wills it was still prized as a family heirloom. William Kent left his daughter Mary a silver tankard and described it as 'now used in my family', underlining the familial connection the object represented.[792] Silverware was also used as a gift to commemorate key stages in the lifecycle, such as when John Partis left each of his nephews 'a piece of Silver Plate to the vallue of Five pounds' for their marriage days.[793] Matthew White left all his silverware to his wife with the exception of that which his children had received from their godparents; these items celebrated their relationship and belonged to them.[794] Wills throw up many other instances of silverware passing between generations and in each case the key point to note is how this kind of gift giving contributed to the circulatory nature of consumption. Acquiring goods was not all about the latest novelties; it was as much about threading together generations and celebrating relationships.

5.5 The kitchen

785 DUL, DPR/I/1/1677/E5/1-2.
786 DUL, DPR/I/1/1694/A3/1.
787 DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/D3/1.
788 DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/H22/1.
789 DUL, DPR/I/2/9, f. 97^{v} – f. 99^{v}.
790 DUL, DPR/I/1/1698/M6/1-2.
791 DUL, DPR/I/1/1670/M2/1.
792 DUL, DPR/I/1/1742/K3/1.
793 DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/P6-1-2.
794 DUL, DPR/I/1/1716/W11/1.

So far we have concentrated on goods found mainly in parlours, halls, closets and various living and sleeping chambers. These were not the only rooms where household expenditure was directed however, and in this section the kitchen is the main focus. Historians charting the development of 'consumer society' often use Goffman's notion of a 'backstage' area to describe the relative unimportance of the kitchen, implying it was a functional space, not somewhere to impress visitors and display wealth.[795] But while useful, the dichotomy between front and backstage is potentially limiting, as the kitchen had a greater significance within the household than this implies. The tendency to downgrade the importance of the kitchen as a 'backstage' space is partly a result of viewing material culture in terms of consumption, as the search for new or luxury goods overlooks everyday conveniences. But material culture is not the same as consumption. Households did not just invest in goods associated with status or leisure; they sought things that eased household production, a point that can be extended to the provision of food for the whole family.[796] This is not to downplay the extent to which food denoted status in the early modern period. Diet was an accepted expression of social place and just as the consumption of expensive foodstuffs was associated with the wealthy, the poorest were defined by lower status foods.[797] As the space used for the preparation of food, in common with other rooms of the household, the size and structure of the kitchen said something about the status of the occupants.[798] Ideally we need to view the kitchen as a space lacking the eye-catching status goods found elsewhere but one reflecting the importance of food within the household. As food was connected to status, so too was the kitchen, though more importantly the kitchen was associated with family sustenance. This imparted a special quality on the kitchen and the goods that facilitated this task.

Expenditure on the kitchen was far from negligible in Newcastle merchant households. The average LDW household kitchen contained around £13 worth of goods, rising to £19 for MDW households and £30 for those in the HDW category. The kitchen was no less important to the burgeoning middle classes of London. Going by the value of goods contained within a room, at the turn of the early eighteenth century Earle calculates that the 'best bedroom' was usually the most valuable but next on the list we find the kitchen.[799]

795 Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2009), 122.
796 Overton et al. *Production and Consumption*, 88; Sara Pennell, '"Pots and Pans History": The Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England', *Journal of Design History*, 11, 3 (1998), 202.
797 Adam Fox, 'Food, Drink and Social Distinction in Early-Modern England', in *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England*, eds. Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (Woodbridge, 2013), 166, 175.
798 Peter Brears, *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London, 2015), 205.
799 Earle, *Middle Classes*, 291.

Some of the items most widely owned by Newcastle merchant households were those used for controlling the cooking fire. Iron grates with end irons at each side usually stood in the centre of the kitchen with the ubiquitous shovel and tongs on hand to stoke the fire.[800] Spits were used to spear meat and cook it over the fire; they could be turned either by a jack or a dog wheel, which are listed in several inventories. Dripping pans were placed beneath the meat to catch the fats and juices and along with ladles used to spoon this liquid over the meat, were widely owned. Cooking pots came in an array of forms, from inexpensive frying pans to more expensive brass or copper pans. Forty percent of inventories list brass pans, though rather than being concentrated in HDW households, ownership occurred in all groups. Copper cooking vessels only appear in 14 percent of inventories, with pots, basins and pans making up around half the items, kettles the rest. Kettles were cooking pots rather than vessels with spouts, and not always made from copper, with around 10 percent of kitchens containing brass kettles. Saucepans were used much as they are now, for cooking sauces and small amounts of food. Only six inventories list them, but they are significant nonetheless, as saucepans are not really suitable for open fires and their presence signifies an enclosed range was used for cooking, once again demonstrating how merchant households partook in changing patterns of domestic behaviour.[801] Less common cooking utensils include fish pans, patty pans (used for cooking small cakes), pudding pans and apple roasters.[802] Households with a higher domestic wealth often contained more expensive copper and brass versions of basic items. Brass mortar and pestles are one example, brass ladles, listed in 23 percent of inventories, another. John Watson's inventory lists both, along with a copper dripping pan, an item widely owned but rarely in copper.[803] The kitchen in Robert Mallabar's household had a range of basic utensils in brass, including tongs and a fire shovel, three ladles, two chafing dishes, four candlesticks, three dishes and four pots, a kettle, and three mortar and pestles.[804]

When it comes to the preparation of food, the rage of equipment grows further. Colanders, rolling pins, mortal and pestles were all standard fare. To the list we can add gill pots, quart pots, flagons, trays, chafing dishes and dredging boxes (used for sprinkling flour). Chopping knives are listed in a third of inventories, shredding knives close to 12 percent. Things like pewter spoons are frequently listed, though small implements might be

800 For the information on individual kitchen implements this section uses Rosemary Milward, *A Glossary of Household, Farming and Trade Terms from Probate Inventories*, Derbyshire Record Society, Occasional Paper No. 1, (1982) and the introduction to Trinder and Cox, *Yeomen and Colliers*, esp. 103-108. The glossary is also very helpful, see 460-476.
801 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 205.
802 DUL, DPR/I/1/1688/W9/1-6; DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5; DUL, DPR/I/1/1660/L2/2-6.
803 DUL, DPR/I/1/1688/W9/1-6.
804 DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/M3/1.

overlooked by appraisers due to their low value. Serving food involved an array of plates, saucers, cups and dishes. These could be earthenware or, more commonly, pewter. Pewter dishes and plates are listed in 55 and 36 percent of sampled inventories respectively, but as many appraisers valued pewter goods together by weight without itemising everything, these are underestimations. Around a quarter of inventories list pie plates and porringers which could be earthenware or pewter. Banqueting dishes, pastry plates, mazerines (deep plates), cheese plates appear less regularly while other items are limited to single households; only one kitchen had an 'egg plate' for example.[805]

Around 15 percent of inventories list spice boxes. As with sugar dishes, no spice boxes are listed in Group B households and more than half appear in those belonging to groups F and G. Spice boxes in themselves were not particularly valuable but their contents could be. Cinnamon, pepper, nutmeg, cloves, mace, ginger—all these and more were welcome additions to one's diet.[806] Purchasing a few spices was not out of the question for households with a modest budget however, and we need view the consumption of costly foodstuffs as something done on varying scales. Mustard, for example, has one of the longest recorded histories of all flavourings in England and being home-grown was cheap and available to all.[807] And whilst only six merchant households owned a mustard pot, they are found at all domestic wealth levels, indicating spiced food was enjoyed throughout the merchant community.

Acquiring kitchen utensils was done in a similar manner to other household goods. A young couple equipping a kitchen for the first time rarely did so with new goods. More commonly they acquired second-hand items, either from a sale or as donations from family members. Once they had the basics they could add other utensils over the course of their lives.[808] Equipping the kitchen in this way was a key stage in the homemaking process. A fully furnished kitchen embodied the core domestic virtues of good 'huswifery', an important point potentially overlooked when the kitchen is denoted a 'backstage' area.[809] 'Huswifery' was less concerned with women maintaining the domestic environment than with their management of the daily consumption needs of the household, with food preparation of

805DUL, DPR/I/1/1731/B8/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5; DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/H22/3-6; DUL, DPR/I/1/1662/G6/4-6.
806 Jon Stobart, *Sugar & Spice: Grocers Groceries in Provincial England, 1650-1830* (Oxford, 2013), Ch. 2.
807 JoanThirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions, 1500-1760* (London, 2009), 315.
808 Sara Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850* (London, 2016), 88.
809 Ibid., 87.

central importance.[810] As Pennell explains, this crucial role connects women to the material culture of the kitchen:

> Pots and pans were material testimony to a predominantly female sphere of not only operation but expertise: items which, in their testamentary descent from female to female, were invested with personal significance as possessions rather than merely utensils, and which thus participated in the moulding of a woman's adult character.[811]

Thus while the kitchen was a space for everyone and, as such, not gendered, cooking was gendered which was reflected in kitchen utensils.[812] Providing technologies designed to ease the demands of 'good huswifery' highlights convenience as an important value in merchant domestic culture. Novelties, luxuries and 'status-enhancing' goods often take centre stage in consumer studies. But whilst identifying when the latest goods and fashions took hold is a valuable exercise, it should not cause us to overlook practicality as a consumer motive. Any item that made the domestic routine more efficient and saved time had a utilitarian value, even if it was inexpensive to buy.

For all the emphasis on cooking, according to Pennell the kitchen was not entirely given over to the preparation of food, rather serving as the 'headquarters' of the household economy and its sociability.[813] Some evidence to support this assertion can be found with the Newcastle apprentice merchant Ralph Jackson, who mentions drinking tea in his kitchen as he chatted with his friend Billy. But on the whole it would seem Ralph more commonly used the parlour for socialising. To give a couple of examples, in one entry Ralph writes: 'after I came home I sat in the kitching[,] My Master and two or three more being in the parler'; of another he writes '[I] came home got my Supper in the kitchin, but all the People supped in the Parlour.'[814] For Ralph the kitchen was largely a functional space where he played his German flute, read, darned his socks and aired clothing in front of the fire.

When we consider how merchant households furnished the kitchen it is further questioned whether the room was used for socialising, as Pennell suggests. Aside from utensils, pots, pans and so on, the goods most commonly found in the kitchen were tables, chairs, cupboards and stools. Occasionally beds appear, as do mirrors. But of all the inventories that list clocks, only one records it in the kitchen.[815] Pictures were equally scarce.

810 Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1450-1750* (London, 2002), 44-5.
811 Pennell, *English Kitchen*, 130.
812 Ibid., 133.
813 Ibid.
814 TA, U/WJ/A, f. 11. Dated Feb. 5, 1750. TA, U/WJ/D, f.66. Dated June 24, 1752.
815 DUL, DPR/I/1/1672/M6/2.

The rooms most congenial to socialising are usually the hall, parlour, dining room or other principal room often described as the 'best chamber'. Taking John Newton's inventory as an example, we find the hall contained a chest of drawers, twenty-four leather and cloth chairs, a clock, two mirrors, a glass case and glasses, seven pictures, four window curtains, an iron chimney along with andirons, shovel and tongs, and a bed. Moving into the parlour, we encounter more beds, mirrors, window curtains, heating apparatus and supplies of linen. In contrast, furniture in the kitchen amounted to two tables, six 'joynt stooles' and three cupboards. Whilst these items enabled people to sit together and socialise, the contrast between the three rooms is clear.[816]

Overall, we can say that the kitchen's importance was rooted in the notion of 'good huswifery'. The provision of conveniences to enable women to effectively fulfil this domestic role formed a key part of the material culture of the household. Many households would have employed female maids, servants or nurses to help with domestic chores, considerably easing the duties a wife was expected to perform.[817] Live-in servants were employed by relatively poor households during the early modern period and would have been a common feature of merchant households.[818] But as female heads of household, wives were ultimately responsible for the nourishment of their family and the technologies designed to facilitate this role formed an important part of the material culture of merchant households.

5.6 Dignity, sociability and the household

In 1624 Henry Wotton wrote that 'Every Mans proper *Mansion* House and *Home*' was 'the *Theatre* of his *Hospitality*, the Seate of *Selfe-fruition* … a kinde of private *Princedome*' which, 'according to the degree of the *Master*', may deserve to be '*decently* and *delightfully* adorned'.[819] These words echo the emphasis the bourgeoisie would come to place on sociability and entertaining in the household. The aim here is to explore how far merchants shared in these values. As we saw in Chapter Two, meeting fellow merchants to exchange news and business information and uphold credit networks was part of daily life—the 'sociability of commerce'.[820] This section continues this theme with a study of the

816 DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/N2/1.
817 For examples of merchant households employing each of these, see DUL, DPR/I/1/1746/R12/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/P6/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1740/I1/1.
818 R. C. Richardson, *Household Servants in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2010), 63-65.
819 Henry Wotton, *Elements of Architecture* (London, 1624), 82.
820 Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998), 123.

consumption of tea and coffee, with the intention of claiming these drinks, which formed part of the wider urban bourgeois culture that came to exemplify polite and refined society in the eighteenth century, were closely tied to the provision of sociability. It is also suggested that table linen contributed to notions of refinement. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the European upper classes came to value notions of 'civility' and 'politeness'. These qualities found expression in table manners and, consequently, tablecloths, napkins, ceramics and utensils acquired significance as denoting refined genteel dining.[821] A similar case can be made for eighteenth-century colonial America, meaning the Newcastle merchant households that shared this approach to dining were part of a much wider phenomenon.[822]

Before the days of mass-consumption, drinking tea and coffee sweetened with sugar was an elitist activity that said something of one's status. Taking a commodity to be mass-consumed when a sufficient quantity was imported into England for a quarter of the adult population to use it at least once a day, tobacco was being massed consumed by 1650, followed by sugar in the early eighteenth century and tea in the 1720s.[823] Coffee also gained in popularity after the mid-seventeenth century. According to Cowan, in England this can be linked to the 'virtuosi', a group of gentlemen who shared a common set of attitudes and intellectual preferences they labelled 'curiosities' and with which they sought to associate themselves with an international elite culture. Coffee was one such curiosity that caught their attention.[824] However, as prices fell and real wages rose during the late seventeenth century in England and northwest Europe, the consumption of coffee soon spread beyond the elite.[825] Indeed, following the opening of England's first coffeehouse in Oxford in 1650, others followed, and soon a daily intake of coffee was part of urban life.[826] As places to conduct business and make new contacts, merchants and coffeehouses went hand in hand. They were places to get up to date with the latest news, as demonstrated by Ralph Jackson who went to the local coffeehouse to read the newspapers while he was as apprentice merchant in Newcastle in the 1750s.[827] Coffee was prized for both its stimulating effects and its role in socialising. According to John Chamberlayne, writing in 1663, it was a drink with a 'singular

821 Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability 1600-1800* (London, 2002), 40.
822 Hodge, *Consumerism and the Emergence of the Middle Class*, Ch. 4.
823 Carole Shammas, 'Changes in English and Anglo-American Consumption from 1550 to 1800', in *Consumption*, eds. Brewer and Porter, 178-185.
824 Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven and London, 2005), 10-11.
825 Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *A History of Global Consumption 1500-1800* (Abingdon, 2015), 133-134.
826 Brian William Cowan, 'The Social Life of Coffee: Commercial Culture and Metropolitan Society in Early Modern England, 1600-1720', Princeton University PhD thesis (2000), vol. 1, 116-118.
827 See, for example, TA, U/WJ/l E, f. 151. Dated May 25, 1756; Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2002), 179.

pleasant taste' that 'agreeth with all ages' which, like tea, 'makes us active and lively, and drives off sleep'. 'Every Drinker of it cannot but be sensible'.[828] The thoughtfulness of the coffee-drinking man of business was in a fact a common image merchants were keen to promote.[829]

Coffee was not just consumed by merchants in coffeehouses. From its introduction to London society, consumption at home was an integral part of coffee-drinking, to the extent that the integration of coffee into domestic rituals and sociability contributed to its sustained growth.[830] Only four Newcastle inventories list 'Coffee Cups' and 'coffee pots', indicating consumption did take place in the home.[831] However, the old problem of probate inventories dying out in the early eighteenth century removes many references from our gaze, as coffee-drinking utensils tend to feature in the very few post-1710 merchant inventories that exist. A clearer picture of the role coffee had in socialising within the merchant community can be gained from Ralph Jackson. By the 1750s, when Ralph was writing, coffee was consumed fairly widely, though whether he was sharing a cup with his master or with friends it obviously still retained its role is socialising. As explained in Chapter Two, for merchants sociability and business often overlapped, such as when people visited the household to discuss business whilst consuming coffee. Ralph gives many instances of this, a typical example being when Edward Dillon, 'Mas^{r} of the Good Intent of Falmouth' was present to arrange loading some coal and shared some coffee with Ralph and his master.[832] Other entries recall how Ralph 'walked upon the key and went to Jn^{o} Simmerells' where he 'got some Coffee' and how he 'went with John to his house, & got a dish of Coffee with him'.[833] Such entries speak for many others and in each case the main point is the connection between sociability and coffee.

Using probate inventories to find evidence of tea-drinking is also hampered by the lack of eighteenth-century documents, but the references we do have can be considered representative of broader practices throughout the merchant community. Four inventories list tea-making equipment, dating from 1690, 1712, 1726 and 1731. While the earliest reference just notes a silver teapot, the eighteenth-century examples describe larger sets. One included a silver teapot, a teapot standard, china cups and saucers, a 'sugar dish' and some 'tea

828 John Chamberlayne, *The Natural History of Coffee, Chocolate, Thee, Tobacco* (London, 1683), 4.
829 Stobart, *Sugar & Spice*, 271-272.
830 Ibid., 36-38.
831 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5; DUL, DPR/I/1/1683/D10/1; DUL, DRP/I/1/1690/H22; DUL, DPR/I/1/1731/B8/1-2.
832 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 123. Dated May 8, 1756.
833 TA, U/WJ/E, f. 56. Dated May 22, 1753; TA, U/WJ/E, f. 18. Dated Feb. 19, 1753.

spoons'.[834] Another lists a 'Tea Table', 'Tea Kettle', 'Two setts of Tea Table China', 'Two Silver Tea Spoons' along with another 'Tea Kettle'.[835] The inventory of Jonathan Roddam similarly records 'a Sett of China & a Tea board'.[836] Ideally we could explore the connection between tea-drinking and sociability by considering the room in which the tea-making paraphernalia was kept. Unfortunately only one inventory provides this information. Thus we learn that in Jonathan Roddam's house the tea-making apparatus and china was stored in a closet in the 'Best Chamber'.[837] The 'Best Chamber' was well-furnished, containing, amongst other things, a feather bed, easy chair, cushions, twelve black cane chairs, an armchair, a large mirror, white window curtains, black tables and cabinets, twenty-five 'little' pictures, calico hangings and quilts, and a wanded screen. As a room suited for entertaining, the tea equipment was on hand ready to serve guests.

Further information on the social role of tea and coffee in merchant households appears again in the pages of Ralph Jackson's diary. Tea-drinking was a favourite pastime of Ralph and its role in sociability can be clearly seen. Scarcely a day passes without tea and the impression we get is that socialising and tea-drinking went hand in hand. Being asked by a friend to 'go and drink Tea with him' was an invitation to chat and catch up with the latest gossip, typical examples being when Ralph writes: '[I] went up to Mrs Beavers & Drunk Tea with My Cousin Spencer[,] Miss Ward, & M^{r} & M^{rs} Jefferson' or when he describes going 'to Saint Nichelous Church and from there to drink Tea with Miss Smith'.[838] Tea was often the drink of choice for business meetings when Ralph was in the company of his master and other merchants visiting the house. If Ralph boarded a ship that was docked in Newcastle tea was often consumed with the captain. Rather than the tea itself being of interest, which was enjoyed by large sections of society by the 1750s, the way Ralph associated its consumption with hospitality shows the role sociability had in social relations within the merchant community.

While men and women both enjoyed tea, there was a particularly strong association with the latter. For contemporaries, tea was a drink 'well suited to women', whom they also regarded as having a particular interest in the china from which it was served.[839] Testing this hypothesis, Weatherill suggests it may be overdrawn, as both men and women collected china

834 DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/H22/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1731/B8/1-2.
835 DUL, DRP/I/1/1726/H2/1.
836 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5.
837 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5.
838 TA, U/WJ/A, f.10. Dated Feb. 4, 1750; TA, U/WJ/A, f. 23. Dated Mar. 19, 1750; TA, U/WJ/B, f. 21. Dated Sep. 21, 1750.
839 Lorna Weatherill, 'A Possession of One's Own: Women and Consumer Behaviour in England, 1660-1740', *Journal of British Studies*, 25, 2 (1986), 140.

and enjoyed tea.[840] Shammas is more supportive of the idea, claiming that statistically women were more likely to be tea-drinkers, 'lending credence to the contemporary assertion that females had a special attachment to the beverage and its accompanying rituals.'[841] Brewing and drinking tea certainly became part of the lives of many urban women from the late seventeenth century onwards, and, what is more, evidence from contemporary literature implies a strong association between women and tea. The tea-table, the often elaborate and elegant structure upon which tea was served, acquired metaphorical associations, 'referring to a space of sociability as much as an item of furniture', with the habit of drinking tea in domestic life being linked to socialization, politeness, consumption and, importantly, femininity.[842] Theoretically the tea-table was a space open to both genders, but tea represented the domestic and feminine interests that contrasted the masculine coffeehouse. As a piece of furniture, the tea-table became central to eighteenth-century conceptions of gender and domesticity.[843] The tea-table was the 'feminine locus where the civilising process could occur' and the associated paraphernalia emphasises the feminine dimension to the material culture of the merchant household.[844] This tells us that whilst the world of commerce was male-dominated, the bourgeois urban material culture to which the more affluent merchants belonged was shaped by both sexes.

Further evidence of how women contributed to this material culture can be seen with the ownership of linen. Linen is a rather vague term that inventory appraisers used to describe an array of items. Trying to quantify each specific piece of linen is unfeasible; comparing overall valuations is a better alternative, which Table 5.3 does for each domestic wealth group. Outside Group B, linen was widely owned, and as we would expect the higher domestic wealth groups had larger collections. The range of valuations show much overlap however, which reaffirms the earlier point that wealth was not the only motivating factor behind acquiring material goods. Having a large family increased the demand for linen while some households were simply willing to spend a larger proportion of their disposable income on something they valued above other goods. Some of the most commonly owned items were things like tablecloths, napkins and towels used to wipe the hands. Napkin presses were devises for pressing and storing napkins and many merchant households owned these too.

840 Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2000), 133.
841 Carole Shammas, 'The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America', *Journal of Social History*, 14. 1 (1980), 16.
842 Markham Ellis, introduction to *Tea and the Tea-Table in Eighteenth-Century England*, vol. 1, *Literary Representations of Tea and the Tea Table*, eds. Markham Ellis (London, 2010), xxi-xxii.
843 Ibid., xxii.
844 Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1997), 21.

Table 5.3: Merchant ownership of Linen

Domestic wealth group	Proportion listing linen (%)	Range of valuations	Mean valued owned
B (£1-£25)	37	£7 and under	£3
C (£26-£50)	69.5	£12 and under	£6
D (£51-£75)	60	£4-£18	£13
E (£76-£100)	76	£3-£24	£11
F (£101-£125)	75	£9-£22	£17
G (£126+)	75	£5-£62	£26

Source: Probate inventory dataset

Tablecloths generally refer to the coverings placed on top of dining tables, though other items of furniture were decorated in a similar manner. From the late Middle Ages to the late Stuart period tables and cupboards were generally covered with ornamental cloths and many inventories list carpets used for this purpose.[845] Carpets were, however, also used for floor coverings and we should not assume all those listed were protective covers for tables. But most tables in the seventeenth century were covered with a cloth of some kind; it seems likely that the 'Carpetts' listed in Henry Bland's hall were placed on top of his oval table and chest of drawers rather than on the floor.[846] The 'velvet carpit' in Edward Blackett's house was also likely to have been decorative: along with a velvet quilt and a set of silk curtains and valance it was valued at just over £22 10s.[847]

Household linen satisfied the need for cleanliness and respectability.[848] Both qualities were associated with housewifery and Weatherill claims women set great store on household linen of all kinds; it was often their 'special contribution to a new household.'[849] Looking at merchant wills, daughters did indeed tend to be left the family linen. Rather than either of his sons, Nicholas Ridley stipulated his three daughters were to have the household linen after the death of his wife Martha.[850] Robert Eden and Robert Roddam both left similar instructions.[851] William Ramsay had no son so he left his linen to the daughter of his brother in law.[852] As explained above with respect to other household goods bequeathed in wills, passing family goods between generations made them heirlooms, giving them a sentimental

845 Macquoid and Edwards, *English Furniture*, vol. 2, 155; Thornton, *Interior Decoration*, 146.
846 Thornton, *Interior Decoration*, 239; DUL, DPR/I/1/1682/B10/1.
847 DUL, DPR/I/11667/B9/1.
848 Alice Dolan, 'The Fabric of Life: Linen and Life Cycle in England, 1678-1810' University of Herefordshire PhD thesis (2015), 20 and Ch. 4.
849 Weatherill, 'Possession of One's Own', 143.
850 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R10/1-2.
851 DUL, DPR/I/1/1711/E3/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1682/R24/1.
852 DUL, DPR/I/1/1716/R1/1.

quality. This can be seen with Francis Gray who left his daughter Jane 'what damaske lining w^{ch} was her mothers', plainly showing the familial link.[853] Robert Forster left his niece all his 'Table Linen' describing it as that which 'my Father and Mother left me', again demonstrating both the circulatory nature of consumption and the important familial link that often underpinned it.[854]

Receiving the family linen was, therefore, part of the homemaking process, denoting a stage in the lifecycle where daughters were setting up households of their own. The significance of household linen extends beyond this however. Taking linen, coffee and tea-drinking, knives and forks together, they signify a change in lifestyle for the merchant households in the early eighteenth century. Meals were becoming more leisurely and sociable events requiring greater preparation in a more elaborate setting.[855] Two further items that contributed to this change in mealtimes were glassware and china. Weatherill's study of Durham and Newcastle in the period 1675-1725 shows china was more commonly owned by townsfolk than their rural counterparts.[856] For England as a whole during the same period, ownership rates hovered around 6-11 percent for households engaged in higher status trades.[857] For the merchant households sampled here, the ownership of china ranged from around 10 percent for LDW households, to 20 percent for those in the MDW group and 30-40 percent for the HDW group. Dishes and plates were the pieces of chinaware most commonly owned, although as appraisers rarely specified exactly what form the china took, it is difficult to be precise. Around 28 percent of inventories list glassware. Ownership did not change significantly over time. This replicates other Northumberland and Durham households in the period 1680-1740 but contrasts with Shammas's study of Worcester and East London which found glassware more common in the 1720s than it had been in the 1660s, something probably explained by the glassworks located around Newcastle that made use of the local supply of coal and ensured a ready supply for nearby householders.[858] Drinking glasses were the item most widely owned by merchant households. Glass vases, basins, plates and pots appear in varying quantities. Drinking glasses would have been used at the dining table; Richard Wright kept his in a closet in the dining room, conveniently placed for when entertaining guests.[859] The drinking glasses recorded in Robert Carr's inventory were also

853 DUL, DPR/I/1/1666/G6/1-4.
854 DUL, DPR/I/1/1708/F8/1.
855 Shammas, 'Domestic Environment', 13.
856 Scammell, 'Was the North East Different?', 17, Table 2.3.
857 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 28, 168, Table 8.1.
858 Welford, 'Functional Goods', 266; Shammas, 'Domestic Environment', 12.
859 DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/W30/1-3.

kept in a closet (along with the household linen) in what was evidently the principal room of the house. Located above the hall, it was heated and furnished with mirrors, window curtains, armchairs, carpets, a case of drawers, a dressing box and some pictures.[860]

The key point to make here requires us to view knives and forks, linen, glassware, china, tea and coffee together, as a set of things that combined to give a new approach to eating and socialising within the household.[861] Glassware and china added decoration; linen improved the appearance of the dining table and aided cleanliness; knives and forks slowed the pace of eating, encouraging conversation and a more dignified approach to mealtimes; tea and coffee provided more opportunities for get-togethers during the day.[862] Entertainment and leisure time sociability within the home were becoming a priority, with the role of women central.[863] On the topic of entertainment, it can be noted that around 12 percent of merchant households contained a musical instrument of some kind.[864] Virginals were the most common, usually found in the hall. A few households contained bass viols and violins, at least one had a defeated lute player, the instrument lying in need of strings in the home of George Dobson.[865] Who played these instruments? The lute was regarded as a 'woman's instrument' and for this reason some men avoided it, as they did virginals, also deemed 'feminine'. Apparently 'real men did not play the virginals' either.[866] However, in reality these gender distinctions were blurred and men and women alike played these instruments.[867] And nor should we exclude children: Ralph Jackson acquired a German flute whilst an apprentice and spend many evenings learning to play; very often he was accompanied by others, indicating how music brought families together to socialise.[868] Games were another source of entertainment. Several inventories list playing tables, which were used for games such as backgammon.[869] Richard Wright also had a whisk box.[870]

860 DUL, DPR/I/1/1675/C7/1-4.
861 Thomas, *Ends of Life*, 224.
862 Shammas, 'Domestic Environment', 13.
863 Ibid., 15.
864 Interestingly, Weatherill found musical instruments too scarce to warrant tabulation in her study. See Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 207.
865 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/D3; DUL, DPR/I/1/1686/B5; DUL, DPR/I/1/1692/W6; DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/B5.
866 Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), 18-20.
867 Ibid., 18-20, 177-178.
868 See, for example, TA, U/WJ/B, f. 11. Dated Aug. 5, 1750; TA, U/WJ/B, f.56. Dated Jan. 25, 1751; TA, U/WJ/C, f. 90. Dated Feb. 17, 1752; Flora Dennis, 'Musical Sound and Material Culture', in *Routledge Handbook of Material Culture*, eds. Richardson, Hamling and Gaimster, 371-382.
869 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/W30/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1665/R25/1; DUL DPR/I/1/1666/H22/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1666/G9/3; DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5.
870 DUL, DPR/I/1/1671/W30/1.

These various forms of entertainment took place within the houses of Newcastle merchants and made for a more sociable atmosphere, helping foster social relations within the community. Refinements in civil behaviour were crucial to reinforce the dichotomy between rich and poor, or 'civilised gentility' and 'brutish vulgarity.'[871] Crucially, civility was a quality displayed by women and men alike.[872] This demonstrates the extent to which both genders contributed to the formation of manners and material culture, not just in merchant households, but amongst the middling sort more generally.

5.7 Print culture

This section ends the chapter with a look at the ownership of books. The proliferation of books and the spread of literacy across the early modern period are well documented and little doubt remains that reading was becoming an increasingly common pastime.[873] Merchants tended to have some of the lowest illiteracy rates, just 5-15 percent in the seventeenth century, placing them directly below the clergy and gentry who had the highest levels in society.[874] Many people valued books for the simple pleasure of reading. Others, seeking self-improvement or education, mined them for information. Merchants doubtless owned and read books for pleasure, though their reputation as a 'bookish group' of 'specialists' was gained through their promotion of general knowledge and learning about their professional activity. Such knowledge provided merchants with intellectual capital and a 'speculative skill' that ensured their good reputation; it also enabled them to assert the virtues of learning as part of the industrious behaviour that justified worldly success.[875] This view of book ownership contrasts that of Thomas, who argues books were acquired for ostentatious display rather than to be read for enjoyment.[876] Books were indeed regarded as symbols of status and refinement; William Ramesey was voicing a widely held view when he wrote in *The Gentleman's Companion* (1676) that 'good Literature' tended to the 'Rooting of

871 Sara Mendelson, 'The Civility of Women in Seventeenth-Century England', in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*, eds. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (Oxford, 2000), 111-125.
872 Ibid.
873 Davis Cressy, *Literacy & the Social Order: Reading & Writing in Tudor & Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980); John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), Ch. 4.
874 Cressy, *Literacy*, 134-137.
875 Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan, introduction to *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, eds. Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan (New York, 2008), 8.
876 Thomas, *Ends of Life*, 123.

Virtue, and good manners, as well as wisdom, in a *Gentleman*'.[877] But books were valued as sources of information and learning and we should not overlook this is our haste to interpret ownership as a desire for social status. To quote Ramesey again, 'The knowledge of a few good books is better than a Library'.[878]

Books could be purchased from booksellers or from estate sales which were often advertised in local newspapers like the *Newcastle Courant*.[879] Some merchants left them in their wills.[880] Ownership was highest amongst Group G households, three-quarters of whom contained books. Outside this group ownership varied from 37 percent to 65 percent. By the later seventeenth century books were reasonably cheap and purchasing the odd volume made little demand on the family budget. Nevertheless, that Group G households owned more books that any other group may point to a wealth effect. Comparing the Newcastle merchant ownership rates to those provided by Weatherill gives context to the figures. According to her data, 19 percent of inventories dating from 1675-1725 list books, although ownership was higher further up the social scale, with 39 percent of gentry inventories listing them and 45 percent of those belonging to the high status trades, the clergy or the professions.[881] Inventories of the middling sort in Northumberland and Durham tell a slightly different story. In the years 1680-1740 only 5-10 percent list books, although compared to rural households, urban homes had a much greater tendency to ownership.[882]

Against this data, Newcastle merchants were more likely to own books, supporting their reputation as a bookish group. However, in both cases a single book counts for the same as a large library; that is, the data is only sensitive to the presence or absence of any number of books. Obviously there is a huge difference to owning a single volume as opposed to an extensive library, but as few inventories specify the number of books or evaluate collections independently of other possessions, it is difficult to overcome this problem. Luckily a few exceptions occur in the merchant inventories and from these we can get a better impression of the size of these collections. Some of the more valuable collections were estimated to be

877 William Ramesey, *The Gentlemans Companion: or, a Character of True Nobility, and Gentility* (London, 1676), 14.

878 Ibid.

879 See, for example, *NC* no. 246 Mar. 5, 1725; *NC* no. 720 Feb. 10, 1739; *NC* no. 760 Nov. 17, 1739; *NC* no. 7 June 12, 1725.

880 DUL, DPR/I/1/1728/S2/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R10/1-2.

881 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 168 Table 8.1.

882 Welford, 'Functional Goods and Fancies', 267-268. For 1680, 19.1 percent of urban inventories list books compared to 1.4 percent of rural ones. By 1720 these proportions stood at 15 percent and 8.1 percent respectively. Welford also analyses ownership by occupational grouping, and whilst merchants were the most likely to own books—two-thirds of merchant inventories list them compared to 55.5 percent for professionals and 18.1 percent for gentlemen—the sample size is too small to be meaningful (just three merchant inventories are included).

worth £5, £8, £10 and £15.[883] These all date from the 1660s and 1670s and must have been sizeable to reach these valuations.[884] One of the more extensive collections appears in the inventory of Joshua Green which lists 112 books along with eighty-two pamphlets and other 'old bookes'.[885] Others notable libraries include those of William Wilch which consisted of 'Fortie small Bookes' valued at 10s, Benezer Durant with thirty volumes worth £2, Robert Carr with 'severall Bookes' worth £4, Jonathan Roddam with eighty-four volumes valued at £5 13s 5s and William Hutchinson with 'divinity books & other bookes' to the value of £5.[886]

Books were obviously important to these merchants, but assessing how so is tricky without knowing the quantity evaluated in each case. Comparing the couple of instances where we have both the number of books and their value, it is immediately obvious that value is a poor indicator of quantity and vice versa. Using the above examples, William's forty books were only worth 10s while the thirty owned by Benezer were worth £2. Despite being larger than Jonathan Roddam's collection, Joshua Green's was worth less (£3 18s 5d compared to £5 13s 5s). By way of comparison, the library of Sir John Barnaby, a landed gent from Herefordshire, contained 600 books but was only valued at £12 when he died in 1701.[887] Books obviously varied greatly in quality and value which makes comparisons between libraries of limited use. However, that some merchants had collections worth upwards of £5 tells us that the owners cherished knowledge and the pleasure of reading.

Although literacy rates were higher for men, we should not assume that women did not own books or read some of those listed in the inventories of their husbands. Large sections of society were uneasy to say the least about women reading books. Some women absorbed these anxieties and, as a result, tended not to record their recreational reading, making evidence hard to find. But whilst literacy rates amongst women may not have progressed in a steady fashion across the early modern period, they were rising, and despite the lack of data on recreational reading women were certainly enjoying fictional works, plays and poetry.[888] Social status was a big factor in determining female literacy. Women that did read books in Newcastle were more likely to be born into the gentry or the merchant elite. It

883 DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/J2/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1661/W22/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/M3/1.

884 That they were valued together rather than being lumped together with other things tells us the appraisers felt them particularly noteworthy.

885 DUL, DPR/I/1/1668/G6/1.

886 DUL, DPR/I/1/1675/C7/1-4; DUL, DPR/I/1/1690/H22/3-6; DUL, 1/1678/W16/1; DUL, 1/1685/D12/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5.

887 David Pearson, 'The English Private Library in the Seventeenth Century', *The Library*, 13, 4 (2012), 380-382. Further examples from the seventeenth century include 405 books left by a Derbyshire Nonconformist minister in 1704 valued at £30 and 130 books left by a curate in Warwickshire in 1705 valued at £19 12s 5d. For an excellent guide to book ownership in seventeenth-century England, see Pearson's on-going database which currently lists around 1,200 individuals, available through the Bibliographical Society website at: http://www.bibsocamer.org/BibSite/Pearson/Pearson.pdf.

is significant that Mary Astell (1666-1731), the great promoter of female education born in Newcastle, came from a wealthy merchant family, her father, grandfather and uncle all Hostmen.[889] Although Mary received her education in philosophy from her uncle Ralph Astell, who had been educated at Cambridge University and was curate of St Nicholas's in Newcastle, she grew up in a merchant household that contained books. Valued at £5 in her father's inventory, these indicate Mary came from a literate household in which recreational reading took place.[890] Mary Astell is somewhat exceptional in coming from such an intellectual household, but on the whole female literacy was not unusual around this time. Furthermore, as reading was often done aloud, in households containing only literate males reading could still be a family activity that included literate and illiterate alike.[891]

So far we have considered books only in terms of how many were owned; nothing has been said with regards to subject matter. This is one of the most fascinating aspects of print culture as it takes us close to the personality of the owner, telling us something about their interests and values. Only rarely do probate inventories itemise books and luckily one such example exists for a Newcastle merchant, Jonathan Roddam. The Roddams had a longstanding connection to the Newcastle region, dating back several centuries. Successive generations had married into other eminent northern families and by the seventeenth century they were part of the Northumberland gentry, established at Roddam Hall in Roddam, near Alnwick.[892] Jonathan's father Robert was also a Newcastle merchant and one of considerable wealth. He made his will in 1682 and left his seven children a total of £3,750 with Jonathan receiving £350 'over and above' what he had already been given.[893]

Eighty-four books are listed in Jonathan's inventory along with an unspecified number of sermons and pamphlets (Appendix 1 provides a transcription of the collection as it appears in the inventory). Broadly grouping the books by subject, just under one quarter relate to religion. These tend to be on religious principles and practice, although there was also a collection of sermons and some bible commentaries. Historical works became increasingly common in private libraries over the course of the seventeenth century and account for around 14 percent of Jonathan's collection, from standard works such as

888 Jacqueline Pearson, 'Women, Reading, Reading Women', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge, 1996), 80-99, esp. 82-84; Cressy, *Literacy*, 120-121.
889 Ruth Perry, 'Astell, Mary (1666-1731), Philosopher and Promoter of Women's Education', *ODNB*.
890 DUL, DPR/I/1/1678/A3/1; Perry, 'Astell, Mary'.
891 Brewer, *Pleasures*, 187.
892 John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland*, vol. 2 (London, 1847), 1134; P. K. Crimmin, 'Roddam, Robert (1719–1808), naval officer', *ODNB*; S. J. Watts with Susan J. Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire: Northumberland 1586-1625* (Leicester, 1975), 252.
893 DUL, DPR/I/1/1682/R24/1.

Raleigh's *History of the World* to specific accounts of Sweden and Denmark.[894] A further 4 percent relate to his career as a merchant, such as Thomas Langham's book concerning duties on merchandise and volumes on trade and coinage. He also owned a copy of Jean Haudicquer de Blancourt's *Art of Glass*, which instructs its readers about glassmaking, the 'Most Noble and Curious of all other Arts', and offers a wealth of advice about glass production and related processes, such as colouring.[895] In common with many other Newcastle merchants, Jonathan was involved in the local glass industry, inheriting his father's interests when he died. Evidently books provided some of the specialist knowledge needed to make a success of the enterprise. Around 5 percent of Jonathan's library consisted of books on poetry and a similar proportion were philosophical works, such as Bacon's *Essays* and Machiavelli's *Prince*. One third of his library was made up of 'Dutch books'; the remainder consisted of an assortment ranging from dictionaries to John Guillim's book on heraldry.

Aside from a few poetry books, there is a marked absence of literary works and plays. If there is a theme running through the collection it relates to spiritual and intellectual enlightenment rather than fictional works directed at the imagination. Information and instruction take precedence. This is reflected in other books that relate to Jonathan's role in civic government as an alderman and, in 1709, as mayor.[896] These include Thomas Pittis' *A Private Conference Between a Rich Alderman and a Poor Country Vicar*, John Evelyn's *Publick employment* and a book against drunkenness.[897] Evelyn published his book as a repost to Sir George Mackenzie's *Moral Essay Preferring Solitude to Publick Employment* (1665) which elevated leisure over business, a topic described by Evelyn's friend and poet Abraham Cowley as 'one of the noblest controversies both modern and ancient'.[898] In a similar vein is the advice literature by the Church of England clergyman Richard Allestree.[899] The first of these is *The Whole Duty of Man* (1657) which was aimed at 'the very meanest Readers' and sought to teach them 'to behave themselves so in this world, that they may be happy for ever in the next'. Jonathan also had a copy of Allestree's *Gentleman's Calling* which attempts to reconcile Christian duty with the demands of power and the temptations of gentility. It was a popular book that went through seventeen editions between 1660 and

894 D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), 151-160.
895 Jean Haudicquer de Blancourt, *Art of Glass* (London, 1699). Quote from preface.
896 John Baillie, *An Impartial History of the Town and County of Newcastle* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1801), 605.
897 Richard Garbutt, *One Come from the Dead, to Awaken Drunkards and Whoremongers: being a Sober and Severe Testimony Against the Sins and the Sinners*… (London, 1675).
898 Clare Jackson, 'Mackenzie, Sir George, of Rosehaugh (1636/1638–1691), lawyer and politician', *ODNB*; Alexander Lindsay, 'Cowley, Abraham (1618–1667), poet' *ODNB*; Gillian Darley, *John Evelyn: Living For Ingenuity* (New Haven and London, 2006), 205.
899 John Spurr, 'Allestree, Richard (1621/2–1681), Church of England Clergyman', *ODNB*.

1693.[900] Taken together, the advice literature and the books concerning public employment describe a man who took both his social position and public duties seriously, someone with a belief in self-improvement and a desire to learn.

The subject matter of the collection is fairly typical of the private library that any professional person or gentleman might own around this time. Books on theology, biblical commentaries and devotional works were a staple feature of most libraries, with history, classics, literature, geography and travel, science and natural history, mathematics, medicine and law appearing in varying degrees. As with Jonathan, many personal libraries also contained bundles of pamphlets.[901] More unusual are his Dutch books and a Dutch bible, the latter of which was deemed to be worth £1, far more than any other single volume.[902] Jonathan also owned a copy of *Porta Linguarum*, an instructor for teaching readers a range of languages, and it could be that the Dutch books were an aid to this endeavour, or evidence he had already mastered Dutch. Many Newcastle merchants traded with the Netherlands and possibly Jonathan learnt Dutch to facilitate his business interests in the region. It was not unusual for English merchants to learn Dutch for this very reason.[903]

In terms of quantity, Jonathan's collection was not particularly large compared with many of the personal libraries amassed by gentlemen and professionals. Between 1640 and the advent of public lending libraries in the 1750s, at many levels of society book ownership grew with the expansion of print culture. More and more people were collecting books and compiling personal libraries, some of which would eventually become publicly available assets.[904] By 1700 personal libraries of professional people or members of the gentry often contained several hundred or even several thousand volumes.[905] For the average provincial merchant such sizeable libraries would have been uncommon however. Overall Jonathan's collection is notable and adds weight to the image of merchants as a bookish group with a

900 Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man* (London, 1680), preface; French, *Middle Sort*, 216.

901 David Pearson, 'Patterns of Book Ownership in Late Seventeenth-Century England', *The Library*, 7, 11 (2010), 139.

902 For example, Pearson has analysed the contents libraries belonging to two Cambridge fellows, two clergymen and a private scholar of gentry status that were auctioned in the 1680s and 1690s. In total there were 6,904 lots, comprising of 4,200 individual titles by around 2,700 authors. The bible was the most common book, appearing in various editions and translations, but only one in Dutch. See: Pearson, 'Patterns', 141-144.

903 Christopher Joby, *The Dutch Language in Britain (1550-1702): A Social History of the Use of Dutch in Early Modern Britain* (Boston, 2015), 133. For the ownership of Dutch book in early modern England, see 197-200.

904 Giles Mandelbronte and K. A. Manley, 'Introduction: The Changing World of Libraries—From Cloister to Hearth', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, vol. 2, *1640-1850*, eds. Giles Mandelbronte and K. A. Manley (Cambridge, 2008), 1-6.

905 Pearson, 'Patterns', 139; J. T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 1999), 163-165.

special interest in general knowledge and information. For merchants like Jonathan, books facilitated an understanding of commercial culture and enhanced their ability to work within it.[906] Private libraries also tell us something of the nature of the individual. In the years following the Restoration, book ownership was increasingly affected by fashion. As with other areas of material acquisition, the exercise of personal choice in forming a library was a way of 'defining individuality and expressing aspirations.'[907] Jonathan's library implies he took his role in public office seriously. He also used books to further his understanding of trade and industry. Doubtless these characteristics applied to other book-owning merchants in Newcastle and beyond.

5.8 Conclusion

The findings of this chapter have implications for studies of early modern material culture in general. We have seen that the living standards of the more affluent merchant households were generally higher than most other occupational groupings in Newcastle. What is more, by the eighteenth century these standards were on the rise, with things like clocks, pictures, walnut furniture, corner cupboards, window curtains, armchairs and cutlery more commonly owned. Tea was also becoming more widely consumed by this time and combined with the growing tendency to own glassware, table linen and cutlery, this evidence points towards a more civilised approach to dining and an emphasis on sociability. This sites these merchant households within a broader urban bourgeois culture that pursued a 'dignified' approach to town life. Partaking in this bourgeois culture would have added to the sense of community between merchant households that shared these common values. That some merchant families shared the dignified approach to urban living of the bourgeoisie calls for greater attention to be paid to the contribution provincial merchants made to the development of material culture in early modern Europe and colonial America.

This is not to suggest that the Newcastle merchant community was united in its style of urban living. Establishing the living standards of merchant households has revealed much variation existed. As in the previous chapter, it can be seen that the notion of community does not necessarily imply homogeneity. Yet despite the varied wealth of the merchant community,

906 Grassby, *Business Community*, 354; Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996), 178; Helen Berry, 'Promoting Taste in the Provincial Press: National and Local Culture in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne', *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 25 (2002), 7.

907 Giles Mandelbronte, 'Personal Owners of Books', in *Cambridge History of Libraries*, vol. 2, eds. Mandelbronte and Manley, 184; Pearson, 'English Private Library', 386-387.

even LDW households would have been in a much better position than the large number of labouring households whose material assets were of insufficient value to meet the £5 threshold for probate. This means that whilst the merchant community had a hierarchy of wealth within it, one exhibited in housing and material possessions, on the whole merchant households did not share the hardships of the poorer townsfolk.

This chapter has also argued that women as much as men contributed to the development of merchant material culture, as can be seen with the requirements of 'good huswifery'. Concentrating on high value novelties and luxuries only reveals a small part of material culture. Expenditure on the kitchen may not have gone towards acquiring walnut furniture and pictures, but it was far from inconsiderable. This tells us the importance contemporaries placed on technologies and conveniences, especially ones that eased the household duties expected of women. Overall, this chapter encourages us to take a broader approach to early modern material culture, one that sees households consuming as units, not individuals, and one giving more attention to the contribution made by merchant households, men and women alike.

Chapter Six

Merchants and Politics

6.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have concentrated on apprenticeship, housing and material culture to demonstrate how individuals became part of the Newcastle merchant community. In doing so, we have seen that bourgeois material culture was transformed by the early modern context and has been studied here as it emerged in the particular setting of Newcastle. Each chapter has broadly related to a stage in the lifecycle and this theme continues here with political participation. Political participation required freeman status. As a freeman one became part of the community, accessing the privileges and economic resources of the town. The status could be acquired through purchase, patrimony but most commonly apprenticeship, making political participation a key stage in the lifecycle that came after occupational training.[908] The main aim of the chapter is to demonstrate the extent to which political control of the Newcastle corporation rested with the merchant community and ask how this monopolisation conditioned social relations. This will be done with a look at charity to see how the merchants and the corporation they dominated dealt with the potentially destabilising situation of having a tiny elite in control of a town characterised by its large labouring population, most of whom were politically marginalised.

Throughout the period that concerns this thesis, most senior positions within the Newcastle corporation were occupied by merchants. Successive charters had helped place control of trade in the hands of an elite group of Merchant Adventurers who defended their supreme economic position through the town corporation, holding a virtual monopoly of the bench of aldermen and dominating the offices of mayor and sheriff as well as securing election to represent the town in Parliament.[909] That they were able to do so says a good deal about merchant status and influence in Newcastle and demonstrates the extent to which control of the coal trade went hand in hand with control of the town itself. The unequal balance of power is evident when the various occupational groups of Newcastle are compared

908 Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth: Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005), 10; and Chapter Two, 33-34 above.

909 Joyce Ellis, 'A Dynamic Society: Social Relations in Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1660-1760', in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1984), 202.

for size. Using baptism records for the years 1701-5, research shows that whereas 37 percent of the population was employed in transport and 42 percent in manufacturing, just 4 percent of fathers are recorded as merchants.[910] Remarkably, within this small group a minority controlled Newcastle trade, the corporation and representation in Parliament. Political participation was not confined to merchants however. One estimate suggests that around half of all male householders shared in the privileges of the town in some way, usually through membership of a craft or trade guild.[911] Holding a minor office or simply enjoying the right to vote likely satisfied many freemen that they were valued members of society with voices to be heard. But, at the same time, there was plenty of criticism about the mercantile domination of the corporation and the convoluted election process which made challenging this inequality extremely difficult.

The chief aim of this chapter is to explore this political domination more fully and ask what implications it had for social relations and the merchant community in Newcastle. Part of the answer will be seen in the widely held assumption that those in positions of power would defend the ancient rights and privileges of the town, something merchant MPs were particularly aware of. The provision of charity was another important mechanism that mediated social relations. Just as the wealthy and powerful were expected to defend the rights of Newcastle, so too were they seen as responsible for providing some material relief for those in need. Chapter Four analysed the 1665 Hearth Tax return and even though the data does not represent the most deprived, the presence of poverty in Newcastle is clear enough. For many single-hearth homes the hardships that accompanied a lack of food and heat were never far away. Ellis argues that, under these circumstances, the provision of charity was a prudent measure to limit the chances of social unrest.[912] Yet whilst urban households were recognised as the foundation of civic order, it was equally the case that charity cemented the good fellowship of the bourgeoisie and 'displayed their capacity to overcome the temptations of possessive individualism.'[913] Charity confirmed the status of the giver as an independent citizen: the bourgeoisie found support amongst themselves, the poor depended on others.[914] Establishing levels of merchant charity is one way of determining how far they shared this

910 Andy Burn, 'Work Before Play: The Occupational Structure of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1710', in *Economy and Culture in North-East England, 1500-1800*, eds. Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie, (Woodbridge, 2018), 123.
911 Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 201.
912 Ibid., 216.
913 Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeoisie Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort', in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke, 1994), 99.
914 Ibid.

collective responsibility towards the poor, and this is attempted here through an analysis of all available merchant wills dating from 1660-1750.

Over the course of the chapter it becomes increasingly clear how important the Merchant Adventurers and Hostmen companies were to merchants as they sought to defend their economic and political monopolies. Members of both organisations dominated the corporation but it was the Merchant Adventurers who exercised the greatest power as it was composed of three mysteries, giving it more votes than any other single mystery.[915] Essentially the Merchant Adventurers represented the unequal distribution of power and wealth in Newcastle and by exploring how far members monopolised positions within the corporation and Parliament we can see the implications this inequality had for daily life.

In doing so, the chapter will contribute to some of the wider debates on European guilds that seek to understand their impact on urban society, whether they helped or hindered economic progress, and why and when they declined.[916] Most historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries repeat an argument put forward by Adam Smith in the 1770s that guilds were monopolies that served as unwelcome barriers to economic growth.[917] However, from the 1980s, the historiography entered a new phase as more attention was given to the day-to-day practice of guilds in a way that challenged the value of research based on craft regulations.[918] The last couple of decades have seen a continuation of this trend with revisionists offering a more positive image of European guilds, one that emphasises their contribution to economic growth and their willingness to innovate.[919]

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915 The three mysteries comprising the Merchant Adventures were the boothmen (grain merchants), drapers (woollen cloth merchants) and mercers (dealers in general dry goods). In total, the incorporated companies of Newcastle were divided into twelve mysteries or fifteen 'bye-trades'. Membership to any gave the individual the status of freemen and the entitlement to vote in the election of MPs. See: Eneas Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, Including the Borough of Gateshead*, vol. 1 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1827), 662-663.

916 Gary Richardson, 'A Tale of Two Theories: Monopolies and Craft Guilds in Medieval England and Modern Imagination', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 23, 2 (2001), 217-242; Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'Guilds, Efficiency, and Social Capital: Evidence form German Proto-Industry', *EcHR*, 57, 2 (2004), 286.

917 Adam Smith, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, eds. R. H. Campbell, A. S. Skinner and W. B. Todd, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1976), 135-136.

918 S. R. Epstein, 'Craft Guilds in the Pre-Modern Economy: a Discussion', *EcHR*, 61, 1 (2008), 155; Ulrich Pfister, 'Craft Guilds, the Theory of the Firm, and Early Modern Proto-Industry', in *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800*, eds. S. R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge, 2008), 25.

919 See, for example, Epstein and Maarten, *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy*; Maarten Prak, Catharina Lis, Jan Lucassen and Hugo Soly, eds. *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation* (Aldershot, 2006); Regina Grafe and Oscar Gelderblom, 'The Rise and Fall of Merchant Guilds: Re-thinking the Comparative Study of Commercial Institutions in Premodern Europe', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40, 4 (2010), 516. Epstein in particular emphasises the important role guilds played in the transmission of knowledge and skills through the institution of apprenticeship. See: S. R. Epstein, 'Craft Guilds, Apprenticeship, and Technological Change in Preindustrial Europe', *The Journal of Economic History*, 58, 3 (1998), 684-713.

The rehabilitation of guilds has not been received without criticism. Ogilvie in particular maintains guilds were monopolies aiming to advance the interests of members over non-members and consumers.[920] Especially relevant for this chapter is her work on merchant guilds in the period 1000-1800. Some historians maintain that merchant guilds were beneficial to society as they offered solutions to problems such as state extortion, imperfect information, commercial insecurity, contract enforcement and economic volatility. By solving these issues merchant guilds supposedly fuelled the medieval 'commercial revolution' and its later early modern counterpart, but for Ogilvie they only offered a 'two-way flow of benefits' between themselves and rulers whilst having 'a malign impact on the rest of the economy'.[921]

This chapter argues that whilst the merchant guilds in Newcastle were monopolistic in nature and reflected and reinforced the uneven distribution of wealth and status throughout the town, they did offer some benefits. Above all the Merchant Adventurers and Hostmen had a long association with the ancient rights and privileges of Newcastle which meant they could help focus support when these rights came under attack. Rivalries between competing merchants were deep-set and frequently bitter. Yet when livelihoods were threatened divisions could be overridden, with the merchant guilds taking a leading stand. Another important aspect of guild life investigated by King concerns their role in fostering social bonds between members. Immigration brought with it the potential for disharmony and her work on Durham and Newcastle guilds in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shows how organized celebrations offered those working in the same trade the chance to bond through a sense of group identity.[922] King offers good evidence that guilds strengthened ideas of community and whilst members came to favour recreational activities outside their guilds as the eighteenth century progressed, the role guilds had in fostering social relations encourages a less negative appraisal than provided by Ogilvie.[923]

Within the debate surrounding the history of European guilds there is much interest over the chronology and reason for their demise. Various dates throughout the early modern period are posited whilst a broad consensus remains elusive. Those concentrating on Newcastle are more in agreement and generally identify the early eighteenth century as the point when guild control started to wane, though surprisingly little is offered on why some

920 Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'The Economics of Guilds', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 28, 4 (2014), 174.

921 Sheilagh Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade: Merchant Guilds, 1000-1800* (Cambridge, 2011), 1-3, Ch. 1 and Ch. 2. For criticism of Ogilvie see Epstein, 'Craft Guilds'; Clare Crowston, 'Women, Gender, and Guilds in Early Modern Europe: An Overview of Recent Research', *International Review of Social History*, 53, 16 (2008), 27.

922 Rebecca Frances King, 'Aspects of Sociability in the North East of England 1600-1750', Durham University PhD thesis (2001), 33.

923 Ibid., 73.

lasted longer than others.[924] Chapter Three has shown that whilst admissions to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers fell after 1660, by 1750 the guild was still very much active, and it will be argued here that its continued existence in the face of opposition was because the merchant oligarchy perpetuated its political domination through the organisation. This reveals some of the complexities the chapter must address, for whilst the Newcastle Company of Merchant Adventurers might help defend the town's rights to trade and foster social bonds between members, it was deeply unjust in the economic and political monopolies its existence entailed.

6.2 Merchants and local politics: the Newcastle oligarchy

By 1660 the Newcastle corporation was dominated by what Nef has termed the 'inner ring'—an elite group of merchants that safeguarded its position through a near monopoly of the bench of aldermen whilst simultaneously providing most mayors, sheriffs and MPs for the town.[925] Merchant domination of civic affairs was not new to the early modern period. Nearly all of the councillors forming Bristol's civic elite in the early fifteenth century were involved in overseas trade and during the later Middle Ages northern towns such as York, Hull and Beverley saw merchants emerge as the 'pre-eminent group in civic government' so successfully that the term 'merchant' became 'synonymous with urban privilege'.[926] Between 1300 and 1509 some 79 percent of mayors in York and 72 percent of those in Hull were merchants.[927] Monopolization of civic office was conditional however. Political demise followed commercial failure and by the mid-sixteenth century the government of York was open to a far wider range of occupational groups.[928] Larger and wealthier merchants able to withstand fluctuating fortunes stood a better chance of survival and Gauci finds that in the years 1660-1720 there remained a 'close relationship between business success and civic activity' in York, with membership to the Merchant Adventurers still valued for the political connection it provided. Even in a period of declining membership 'there remained a

924 Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 201; Rebecca King, 'The Sociability of the Trade Guilds of Newcastle and Durham, 1660-1750: the Urban Renaissance Revisited', in *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*, eds. Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot, 2004), 58; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), 58.

925 J. U. Nef, *The Rise of the British Coal Industry*, vol. 2 (London, 1932), 118-121.

926 David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991), 56; Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1998), 67.

927 Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, 38-67.

928 Ibid., 321.

significant overlap in the leaderships of local government and commerce.'[929] The concentration of economic activity in a small group of elite merchants has also been noted as fundamental to Liverpool's rapid growth after the 1680s while eighteenth-century Hull was similarly administered by a merchant oligarchy that regarded political leadership as 'a matter of social prestige.'[930]

Whilst comparisons can be drawn between Newcastle and these towns, the former had a distinct trajectory. Newcastle was a successful exporter of wool in the medieval period and reinvented itself as a coal town in the early modern period. The contrast with neighbouring Sunderland is particularly stark as this town developed without a medieval urban infrastructure. The demand for coal was crucial to the expansion of Newcastle. Coal exports increased most notably towards the end of the sixteenth century, rising fourfold between the 1560s and 1590s and doubling again over the next twenty-five years to reach almost 400,000 tons annually by 1620.[931] Amidst this expansion was a tendency for control of the coal industry to pass into the hands of an 'inner ring' elite composed of leading merchants that controlled the municipal government and dominated the bench of aldermen.[932] The 'inner ring' had their monopoly endorsed in 1600 when Newcastle was issued a charter outlining a new system of government and the Hostmen, a group of freemen whose historic duties were to 'host' merchant strangers to the town and supervise the buying and selling of their wares, received incorporation as the Company of Hostmen.[933] Significantly, the town charter appointed the governor of this newly formed company to be the first mayor following its issue; the ten aldermen were also Hostmen.[934] The formation of the company represented an attempt by elite merchants to entrench their position against lesser merchants who sought access to the highly lucrative coal trade. These second rank merchants achieved some success during the Civil War, as the 'new men' who took over from the royalist supporting elite were drawn from their ranks. But with the return of the monarchy in 1660 came the reinstatement of the old inner ring to their former position as civic leaders.[935]

929 Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: the Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001), 95, 144-147.

930 Ibid, 59; Brian W. Refford, 'The Bonds of Trade: Liverpool Slave Traders, 1695-1775', Lehigh University PhD thesis (2005), 40-41 and Ch. 2; Peter Earl, *The Earles of Liverpool: A Georgian Merchant Dynasty* (Liverpool, 2015), Ch. 2; Gordon Jackson, *Hull in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Economic and Social History* (Oxford, 1972), 301, 307.

931 John Hatcher, *The History of the British Coal Industry*, vol. 1, *Before 1700* (Oxford, 1993), 78.

932 J. U. Nef, *The Rise of the British Coal Industry*, vol. 2 (London, 1932), 118-121.

933 Simon Healey, 'The Tyneside Lobby on the Thames: Politics and Economic Issues, c.1580-1630', in *Newcastle and Gateshead before 1700*, eds. Diana Newton and A. J. Pollard (Chichester, 2009), 219-240; Roger Howell, *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution: A Study of the Civil War in North England* (Oxford, 1967), 35-40.

934 Howell, *Puritan Revolution*, 42-43.

935 Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 202-203.

As Table 6.1 demonstrates, the merchant elite continued to hold a near monopoly of the offices of mayor, sheriff and the bench of aldermen for the next century with little to challenge their supremacy. Although the data clearly outlines the extent to which the corporation was filled with Merchant Adventurers and Hostmen, it is important to note that membership to each company did not carry equal benefits.

Table 6.1: Merchant Adventurers and Hostmen serving as mayors, sheriffs and aldermen 1660-1760

Office		1660-79	1680-99	1700-19	1720-39	1740-59	TOTAL
Mayor	Appointed in Period (N)	21	22	22	20	21	106
	Merchant Guild Members* (N)	20	22	22	20	20	104
Sheriff	Appointed in Period (N)	20	22	20	20	20	102
	Merchant Guild Members (N)	17	21	19	20	20	97
Alderman	Appointed in Period (N)	22	25	16	10	10	83
	Merchant Guild Members (N)	22	20	16	8	10	76

*Either Merchant Adventurers or Hostmen
Sources: C. H. Hunter Blair, 'The Mayors and Lord Mayors of Newcastle upon Tyne 1216-1940 and Sheriffs of the County of Newcastle upon Tyne 1399-1940', *AA*, Fourth Series, 18 (1940), 65-94; Madeline Hope Dodds, ed. *The Register of Freemen on Newcastle upon Tyne*, Newcastle upon Tyne Records Committee vols. 3 and 6 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1923-6); F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts from the Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Surtees Society vol. 101 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1899); F. W. Dendy, ed. *Extracts from the Records of the Company of Hostmen of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Surtees Society vol. 105 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1901); Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 203 Table 27.

Of the 277 merchants appointed to the three offices, just 6 percent held membership to the Hostmen alone. The reason for this disparity is partly explained by the differing rights each company enjoyed. There was more to be gained by being a Merchant Adventurer than a Hostman as, unlike the other mysteries, membership to the latter was open to all freemen. Originally the 1600 charter stipulated that the newly formed company could admit members at its pleasure, but following a complaint by the mayor and burgesses in 1603 it was ordered that any freemen might seek entrance, the only requirement being a fee of 13s 4d. Furthermore, as the Company of Hostmen was not one of the twelve mysteries, members did not have a vote as a separate entity. A Hostman only had a voice if he was a member of another company, more often than not the Merchant Adventurers. It is this dual membership that characterises the officeholders of the oligarchy.[936] Table 6.1 also shows merchants retained a close control of the bench of aldermen. Ellis has noted that whilst the electoral process 'conceded an illusory representation' for the twelve main guilds, in practice it

936 Howell, *Puritan Revolution*, 44-45.

remained a 'system of co-option'.[937] The Company of Merchant Adventurers was best placed to benefit from the system as it was composed of three of the twelve mysteries, the boothmen, mercers and drapers, which, as noted above, meant the company was able to nominate three times as many electors as any of the other mysteries.[938]

The political monopoly clearly rested with the Merchant Adventurers. Monopolising the corporation would have been impossible for Hostmen alone. Essentially the Company of Merchant Adventurers acted as a filter to entry to the corporation and ensured that the elite continued to be drawn from its ranks. This meant that for the majority of people seeking entry into the Newcastle merchant community—and eventually the corporation itself—it was a case of going through the process of apprenticeship discussed in Chapter Two.[939] Families had to pay high premiums in order to secure a reputable merchant for a master and the elitism this engendered had long term implications for the composition of the corporation and everyday social relations. As noted above, parish records for 1701-5 show that close to 80 percent of fathers were employed in transport and manufacturing while just 4 percent are recorded as merchants. Given that the vast majority of mayors, sheriffs and aldermen were drawn from this small group of the population, it is striking just how far the corporation failed to reflect the occupational structure of the town.[940] Even though around half of all male householders in Newcastle shared the privileges of the town to some degree, a proportion that compares favourably to other urban centres, there was little doubt where ultimate control rested.

The mercantile political domination of Newcastle was of a different order than Bristol. Merchants had a leading role in town affairs in Bristol in the late Middle Ages and their presence increased over the course of the sixteenth century.[941] The early decades of the seventeenth century saw the Merchant Venturers strengthen their hold with around 60 percent of mayors and aldermen members of the company, proportions that rose during the Civil War.[942] Yet this was still not quite the near monopoly of office holding described in Table 6.1. Both towns had merchant communities that provided the majority of civic leaders but in Newcastle merchant control of the government was particularly strong. Sacks argues that the Bristol corporation was 'never intended to be a cross-section of civic society', rather an

937 Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 202.
938 Howell, *Puritan Revolution*, 44.
939 Admission to the company was possible via patrimony which entitled elder sons to forego apprenticeship and join their father's guild.
940 Burn, 'Work Before Play', 123.
941 Sacks, *Widening Gate*, 56, 164.
942 Ibid., 166-167.

'organization of the community's social and economic leaders' that were chosen on the basis that their personal wealth could 'bear the cost of service.'[943] Certainly there is something in this idea, but it fails to account for the widespread opposition to the uneven distribution of power within both towns. Criticism of the Newcastle elite was routine, especially amongst those aspiring to political power, often up-and-coming merchants frustrated at their lack of involvement in local affairs.[944] The merchant guilds provided dissatisfied residents with a target for their grievances and freemen became radicalised in their quest for greater participation in the running of their town.[945] Evidently there was more significance to political power that Sacks allows. For one thing political influence carried social prestige. In Newcastle it enabled the elite to protect their dominate position within the coal trade. Others might want to defend or promote a cause that offered personal or collective benefits. Reasons such as these made political power desirable.

6.3 Defending the merchant monopoly

The Merchant Adventurers valued their political monopoly because it ensured their control of trade remained intact. Many members of the company were also Hostmen and eager to leave a small elite in control of the coal trade. How the Merchant Adventurers defended themselves against challenges to this state of affairs is the topic of this section.

The first example to consider is the response the Merchant Adventurers gave to James II when he ordered them to make favoured individuals free of the organisation. The king's 'systematic management' of the boroughs and corporations involved controlling the elective franchise in order to send MPs to Parliament who were willing to repeal anti-Catholic legislation such as the Test Act and support the Declaration of Indulgences.[946] As part of this policy, in 1686 James ordered the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers to make William Creagh, a committed Roman Catholic, a member. The company was far from compliant and in July 1687 James wrote to them expressing his displeasure:

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943 Ibid., 167.

944 Howell, *Puritan Revolution*, 53-57.

945 MPs responded to these demands and the Blackett family, who held one seat in every Parliament from 1673 to 1777 (with the exception of 1705-10), traditionally championed the causes of the freemen. See: Romney Sedgwick, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754*, vol. 1 (London, 1970), 298; Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 205.

946 Jonathan Clark, *From Restoration to Reform: The British Isles 1660-1832* (London, 2014), 149; J. H. Sacret, 'The Restoration Government and Municipal Corporations', *EHR*, 45, 178 (1930), 232 and *passim*; Basil Duke Henning, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 1 (London, 1983), 348.

> Wee are given to understand that in pursuance of our said Letters hee [William Creagh] has beene Admitted, but not in so ample a manner as Wee intended, Wee have thought fitt hereby to request you, that you cause his said Freedomes to be Recorded by Orders of the Common Councell and the Companys of Hostmen and Merchants, so as hee and his Posterity may be enabled to take Apprentices, and enjoy all other Franchises, which any Freemen of the said Corporation enjoys, either by descent, or as having served as an Apprentice.

Reluctantly the company ordered Creagh 'should be Recorded an absolute Free Brother.'[947] Following his attempts to make Creagh a 'free Merchant of our said Towne and County of Newcastle', later in the year James instructed that John and Thomas Errington, two Northumberland gents and 'considerable dealers in Leade', also be made freemen.[948] Similar objections were raised by the Merchant Adventurers. They emphasised the 'greate Prejudice' they would 'sustaine thereby' if monarchs continued to make freemen at will, feeling that this would violate their longstanding right to self-regulation.[949]

July 1688 saw yet another letter arrive from James, this time ordering the company to make Edward Grey a free merchant of the town.[950] They wrote to Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, expressing their disapproval, explaining they had 'deferred the executing' of the order 'untill his Majesty and your Lordshipp were acquainted with the greate inconveniences it would cause to the Antient and Numerous Society'. They begged Sunderland to 'intercede to his Majesty' with the hope he would 'recall this his Letter Mandatory; And that for the future his Majesty would be pleased not to grant any more.'[951] The company then addressed the king directly. Admitting people to their freedom who had not served a formal apprenticeship would tend to the 'Ruine and Dissolution' of their 'ancient Society'. 'If freedomes may be obtained without Service' the incentive for 'persons of Quality and Gentry' to pay 'considerable Sumes of Money' would be reduced; few would 'serve and abide Ten yeares before they could be free of this Fellowshipp.'[952] Trade would suffer if 'Men unexperienced' and 'not Educated therein have a Liberty and Freedome to intermedle.' As a final defence they claimed membership was 'now more numerous then hath beene knowne in anytime of memory & noe trade answerable to aforde a comfortable support to the present Members. If more be Admitted', they complained, 'it tends greatly to theire impoverishment.'[953] The company enlisted Edward Ridley to campaign on their behalf in

947 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 142.
948 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 128.
949 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 156.
950 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 55-f. 56.
951 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 157.
952 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 156.
953 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 156-f. 157.

London. In January 1689 he received £10 for his 'charges and care of the Companys affaire at London' regarding James II's attempt to grant Edward Grey 'Freedome by Mandamus', the company happily noting that 'All Freedomes by Mandatory Letters were made null & voyde', presumably a reference to the *Proclamation for Restoring Corporations to their Ancient Charters, Liberties, Rights and Franchises* that James was compelled to issue in October 1688.[954]

From the exchanges between the Merchant Adventurers and James II we can see how the company resisted attempts to infiltrate their ranks. Considering the king himself found it difficult to penetrate the merchant monopoly we can well imagine the sense of frustration citizens of the town felt at their inability to gain a foothold in the corporation. Excluded freemen did not passively accept their marginalisation and on several occasions craft representatives disrupted elections, such as in 1684 when they 'willfully absented [themselves] and obstinately refused' to attend the election.[955] Attempts were also made to challenge the magistrates in their defence of merchant privileges and petitioners complained at the lack of balance between merchants and other trades.[956] But little changed and the monopoly endured.

The criticisms levelled against the Newcastle merchant guilds were part of a much broader challenge to monopolies of all sorts that was gaining momentum in the seventeenth century.[957] Monopolies had been a grievance during the reign of James I and in 1624 Parliament devised the Statute of Monopolies to address these concerns, although the ban excluded trade companies and corporations in order to uphold the rights of organisations such as the Merchant Adventurers.[958] Commercial monopolies came under fire again during the Civil War when the Levellers argued they denied the birth-rights of their countrymen and during the Commonwealth free trade was one of the most pressing problems facing the Council of Trade, with the Merchant Adventurers a prime target of agitations.[959] The 1651

954 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 161; By the King, *A Proclamation for Restoring Corporations to their Ancient Charters, Liberties, Rights and Franchises* (1688).

955 Quoted in Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 204.

956 Ibid.

957 C.G. A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*, vol. 2, *Industry, Trade and Government*, 200. The state was becoming increasingly involved in promoting trade through its own means, such as with the Board of Trade, rather than relying on private associations. Parliamentary statutes such as the Navigation Acts also meant that many of the services once provided by companies were no longer required.

958 Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution 1625-1660* (Oxford, 2002), 65; J. P Cooper, 'Economic Regulation and the Cloth Industry in Seventeenth-Century England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 20 (1970), 80-82.

959 J. P. Cooper, 'Social and Economic Policies under the Commonwealth', in *Land, Men and Beliefs: Studies in Early Modern History*, eds. G. E. Alymer and J. S. Morrill (London, 1983), 222-223, 232, 236; Thomas L. Leng, '"His Neighbours land Mark": William Sykes and the Campaign for "Free Trade" in Civil War

Navigation Act dealt a further blow to the old monopolies, representing, in the words of Hill, the 'victory of a *national* trading interest over the separate interests and privileges of the companies.'[960] In *A Discourse of Trade* (1694) Josiah Child summed up this line of thinking when he wrote that '*all restrictions of Trade are naught* … no *Company* whatsoever … can be for Publick Good'.[961] The 'new economic climate' of Hanoverian England did little to change opinion with Adam Smith offering strong criticism of monopolies in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776).[962]

Yet long before Smith was writing, European guilds had been suffering from mounting opposition which historians connect to their demise. According to Ogilvie, English towns were amongst the first to lose their guilds, explaining that after 1500 merchant guilds slowly lost their privileges and morphed into purely social and cultural associations.[963] The evidence discussed above places Newcastle rather awkwardly into this theory, singling it out for its distinctiveness. As we have seen, by their own admission the Merchant Adventurers were 'more numerous then hath beene knowne in anytime of memory' in the 1680s. Furthermore, Ellis suggests that most Newcastle guilds saw membership peak in the first few decades of the eighteenth century, and whilst this marked their high watermark, their decline was 'neither rapid nor uniform'.[964] Furthermore, Chapter Three showed that whilst enrolments to the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers fell after 1660, by 1750 the guild was still very much a living entity, raising further doubts over Ogilvie's claims.

As to why the Newcastle merchant guild survived in the face of mounting opposition, part of the reason is the political domination it afforded members, enabling them to maintain their stranglehold on the town government. Clark, writing in 1808 about Newcastle's 'Mercantile Societies, anciently called Guilds or fraternities', sums up the situation in the following way:

> the incorporated Companies of Newcastle are the very ground work of the other parts and offices of the Corporation; and if suffered to fall, the rest must of consequence follow. It therefore becomes our duty to observe, with painful regret, that these essential parts of this Corporation are, in general, so tied up, by excessive fines and illegal fees of admission, and clogged with such a number of useless, not to say pernicious bye-laws, as threaten, in a little

England', *Historical Research*, 86, 232 (2013), 232-233 and *passim*.

960 Christopher Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution: A Social and Economic History of Britain 1530-1780* (London, 1967), 125. Emphasis in original.

961 Josiah Child, *A Discourse on Trade* (London, 1694), 103. The only exception he allowed was if companies were open to all subjects at a cost of no more than £20.

962 Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, eds. Campbell, Skinner, and Todd, vol. 1, 135-136.

963 Ogilvie, *Institutions*, 32-38, 183-188 and *passim*.

964 Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 201.

> time, almost to annihilate them; the number of meeting brethren being reduced considerably in almost every Company, some so few as scarce to deserve the name of Society, and others are already extinct. We hint this for the consideration of such Companies; that, instead of rigidly adhering to those points which have brought them into this predicament, they may, by a proper alteration in their bye-laws, remedy the defect before it be too late.[965]

Clark clearly acknowledges the close connection between merchant guilds and the corporation. At a time when membership was waning he regarded these guilds as 'essential parts' of the corporation yet feared they would disappear due to being mired in bureaucracy. Writing in 1827, Mackenzie similarly felt Newcastle mercantile societies had 'survived the period of their utility' on account of the 'restrictive, monopolizing maxims and rules of old times' being 'quite incompatible with the spirit of the present age'. Yet 'Incorporated Companies still constitute the very ground-work of the other parts and offices of the corporation'.[966] Although clearly waning in power at the time, these early nineteenth-century writers show merchant guilds still had an important role in the Newcastle government, albeit one hampered by excessive bureaucracy.

Another reason why the merchant guilds endured in Newcastle was their ability to defend the town's rights, such as when James II tried to impose favoured individuals on the Merchant Adventurers. A crucial element of bourgeois identity was freedom. Freedom arose from urban rights and liberties. The bourgeoisie could defend these rights far more effectively as a collective and guilds acted as this associational line of defence for the economic privileges upon which urban identities rested.[967]

6.4 Defending the rights of Newcastle: merchant MPs

For all the criticism of the merchant oligarchy there was a widely held assumption that those in positions of power would defend the collective rights of the town—the ancient privileges that protected the livelihoods of many householders. When Walter Blackett and Nicholas Fenwick, successful candidates at the 1741 election, assured voters of their 'inviolable Attachment to such Principles as were the Basis, and have through Ages been the Preservation, of our excellent Constitution', they were acknowledging how important this

965 Joseph Clark, *The Newcastle Freeman's Pocket Companion* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1808), 98.
966 Mackenzie, *Descriptive and Historical Account*, vol. 1, 662.
967 Barry, 'Bourgeoisie Collectivism?, 90-92, 103.

duty was to voters.[968] In this section it will be argued that Newcastle MPs did indeed take this responsibility seriously, not least because their own business interests could suffer if the privileges of the town (especially the coal trade) were not defended.

The period that concerns this thesis was an important one with respect to the prominence afforded to economic affairs in Parliament. According to Davies, the period 1660-1760 witnessed a 'commercial revolution' that transformed not just merchant organization and the ancillary services to trade, but also capital accumulation, investment, industry and the social habits of everyday life.[969] With the commercial revolution economic affairs received more attention in politics and research confirms that between 1660 and 1800 economic related initiatives were on the rise; the Commons were becoming more responsive to business pressure and the nation's rulers prepared to 'accord commercial matters greater recognition as true affairs of state'.[970] The level of merchant involvement in these 'affairs of state' was, however, rather modest. During the Interregnum and Restoration merchants were appointed to committees of trade; one such example is the Council of Trade established by Charles II which had sixty-two members, at least twenty of whom were London merchants. But their role was purely advisory and this early experiment of merchant involvement did not survive past the mid-1660s; the early promise went unfulfilled. The Privy Council oversaw trade through a succession of committees, only one of which had a strong mercantile presence. Executive control of trade saw no immediate change following the 1688 revolution, and, overall, the public role of the merchant was not formalised and control of trade remained with the gentry.[971]

One challenge facing merchants wishing to alter this state of affairs was the discussion taking place over their credentials as public figures.[972] Some social commentators sought to encapsulate the nature of the merchant and highlight his inherent qualities which they thought business attracted and reinforced.[973] For the anonymous author of *The Character and Qualification of an Honest Loyal Merchant* (1686), 'The Loyal Honest MERCHANT is … A diligent Bee, ever busie in bringing Honey to the *Publick Hive* … One of the most useful members in a State, without whom it can never be *Opulent* in Peace, nor

968 *NC* no. 2,476 May 23-30, 1741.
969 Ralph Davies, 'A Commercial Revolution: English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', The Historical Association General Series, No, 64 (London, 1967), 1.
970 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 203-204, 223-227; See also: Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth-Century Politics* (Oxford, 1952).
971Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 180-189.
972 Ibid., 180-181.
973 Richard Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1995), 334.

consequently *Formidable* in War.'[974] '[T]here is no Man whom I so highly honour as the Merchant', commented Richard Steele in 1714, a sentiment later echoed by David Hume who called merchants 'one of the most useful races of men.'[975] However, on the whole writers approached the question of 'the merchant in society' from the perspective of the gentleman 'in order to see how the trader fitted into the predominant culture of the governing classes.'[976] In a society dominated by the authority of landed estates, trade was often viewed with a mixture of 'fear, suspicion, and contempt.'[977] One such viewpoint playing up to this suspicion of trade argued 'A *timber-tree* is a *merchant adventurer*' in that 'you shall never know what he is *worth*, till he be dead.'[978]

Some critics were more interested in disparaging the merchant community and confirming the inherent superiority of the landed gentry. One example can be seen in the anonymous pamphlet entitled *Advice to the Electors of Great Britain* (1708) which urged readers to 'chuse none but landed Men', for whilst 'Men grown rich in Trade' were not without their value, only gentlemen with landed estates were trustworthy for the simple reason they were 'always to be found; they cannot run away, if they should be tempted to consent to a wicked Thing, they are answerable to the World, and to their Neighbours'.[979] Such writers were using the longstanding suspicion of merchant wealth as a reason against their suitability for public office. So whilst trade expanded and commercial matters were afforded greater priority in Westminster during the commercial revolution, and 'merchants, once widely criticized for their selfish pursuit of enrichment' came 'to be celebrated for their valuable services to society', their suitability for public roles remained contested and the landed gentry continued to dominate parliamentary affairs.[980]

Merchants did not silently accept their lack of influence in national affairs. In the 1690s, Dalby Thomas, a prominent colonial merchant, was a leading voice calling for the establishment of a council of trade composed of experienced merchants rather than peers and members of the gentry who dominated the Lords of Trade.[981] In a similar manner, in a 1696

974 Anon., *The Character and Qualification of an Honest Loyal Merchant* (London, 1686), 1.
975 Richard Steele, *The Englishman: Being the Sequel of the Guardian* (London, 1714), 26; David Hume, *Essays, Moral Political, and Literary*, eds. T. H Green and T. H. Grose, vol. 1 (London, 1882), 324.
976 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 160.
977 Ibid., 2.
978 John Houghton, *A Collection for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, vol. 3 (London, 1727). 165. Originally appeared in issue no. 478, September 9, 1701.
979 Anon., *Honest Advice to the Electors of Great Britain, in the Present Choice of their Representatives* (London, 1708), 8; Grassby, *Business Community*, 334.
980 Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2009), 144.
981 Perry Gauci, 'Thomas, Sir Dalby (c.1650-1711), Merchant and Writer', *ODNB*; Sir Dalby Thomas, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West-India Collonies* (London, 1690), Ch. V. The Lords of Trade later became the Board of Trade.

pamphlet concerning the abuses of the East India Company, the political writer and economist Roger Coke complained that for the previous eighty years Parliament had failed to properly regulate trade, highlighting the infrequency of sessions as a contributing factor. He contrasted England with Holland where merchants were 'generally' officers who sat all year round which enabled them to address grievances as and when they arose.[982] In common with others who advocated a council of merchants, Coke argued that merchants were the best possible judges of matters concerning trade and commerce. Apparent success came in 1696 with the creation of the Board of Trade, though once again this was only an advisory body and just one of the seven members had direct experience as a merchant.[983] The Board failed to become the much desired 'commercial meritocracy'. Even so, government circles and the landed sector were not entirely indifferent to matters of trade, as expert knowledge was sought for the Board. But without the transference of executive powers its effectiveness was much hampered.[984]

Lurking in the background to these events was the political agenda of the court opponents. This group sought to limit the influence of the government's 'monied' supporters in the Lower House, such as the continuing campaign to enforce landed property qualifications for MPs.[985] Judging by the work of some historians these efforts were reasonably successful. Grassby argues that throughout the seventeenth century the business community was unable to challenge the 'political supremacy of the landed interest', meaning merchants were forced to rely on the cooperation of landowners to defend or further their interests; they 'were a useful conduit for ideas', he argues, 'but they neither decided nor implemented policy.'[986] Clark also questions whether merchants 'made any breakthrough in status or political power before 1832', pointing out that the Parliament of 1641 featured fifty-five merchants and that of 1754 just five more.[987] A more positive reading is offered by Gauci. Gauci regards the Augustan period as 'an important stage in the changing relationship between the merchant classes and Parliament' on account of the increased number of merchant MPs and an improved success rate for bills pertaining to commercial issues.[988] Corfield further adds that participation in eighteenth-century parliamentary politics was not restricted to the landed elite but accessible to successful commercial men who had sufficient

982 Roger Coke, *Reflections Upon the East Indy and African Companies* (London, 1696), 23-24; John Callow, 'Coke, Roger (c.1628-1704), Political Writer and Economist', *ODNB*; Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 186.
983 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 186-188.
984 Ibid., 189, 192-193.
985 Ibid.
986 Grassby, *Business Community,* 233.
987 Clark, *From Restoration to Reform,* 27-28.
988 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 233.

wealth and lived in appropriate style.[989] Statistics seem to suggest, however, that no radical change in the number of merchants MPs took place between 1660 and 1750. Of the total number of MPs in the period 1660-90, merchants made up just 3.7 percent. From 1690 to 1715 this proportion increased to 7.9 percent but thereafter changed little, with 7.3 percent of MPs being merchants in the years 1715-54.[990]

Such statistics lend support to those who claim that throughout the period 1660-1750 merchants remained 'in the electoral shadow of the landed gentlemen' with very few entering the elite circle that ran the country; most 'had to settle for profit and influence rather than power.'[991] Newcastle stands to challenge such an interpretation: merchants did not exist in the political shadow of the landed gentry. Newcastle was responsible for sending two MPs to Parliament and in the period under study sixteen different individuals represented the town (see Appendix 2). All were connected to the mercantile world. Most hailed from wealthy merchant families and were men of high social standing, all but six having the title 'Sir'. Several attended university or the Inns of Court, some both. Sir William Blackett, William Carr, Matthew Ridley and Sir Walter Blackett all attended Oxford University, with Ridley going on to Gray's Inn and Carr to Lincoln's Inn. William Calverley also attended Lincoln's Inn, albeit without first studying at university.[992] Henry Liddell was also educated at the Inns of Court (Inner Temple) though like Calverley he had not attended university beforehand.

Regardless of their election to Parliament, receiving a higher education would have distinguished any Newcastle merchant, most of whom would have received their primary education at a local school or from a private tutor before commencing their apprenticeship.[993] Any merchant attending university in the late seventeenth century was in fact fairly unusual.[994] The largest single group entering St John's College, Cambridge in the 1690s, around 28 percent of students, had fathers in the clergy while 27 percent of students entering Caius College were sons of gentlemen. For merchants the proportions were 3 percent and 10 percent respectively.[995] However, whilst attending university singled out merchant MPs

989 Penelope J. Corfield, 'The Rivals: Landed and other Gentlemen', in *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914: Essays in Honour of F. M. L. Thompson*, eds. Negley Harte and Roland Quinault (Manchester, 1996), 10.

990 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 199 Table 5.1. For further estimates see Grassby, *Business Community*, 224.

991 Grassby, *Business Community*, 233; Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 203-204.

992 Henning, *House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 2, 4-5. Whilst from a Newcastle merchant family, Calverley seems to have been a London lawyer whom the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers occasionally consulted for legal advice.

993 See Chapter Two above.

994 Grassby, *Business Community*, 351 claims the 'learned merchant' was the exception.

995 Lawrence Stone, 'The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640', *P&P*, 28 (1964), 66. For the period 1630-9, 25 percent of Cambridge students entering St John's College and 46 percent entering Caius College were gentlemen. For merchants the proportions were 2 percent and 3 percent respectively.

within Newcastle, compared to MPs in general they were less remarkable, as 48 percent of the 2,040 MPs who served in the period 1660-90 attending either Oxford or Cambridge.[996] Wrightson argues that time spent at these institutions promoted self-awareness amongst the ruling class, meaning the Newcastle merchants with a higher education shared a bond that set them apart from the rest of the town.[997] At the very least we can say that as an educated and wealthy group, merchant MPs enjoyed a high status in Newcastle enhanced by their election to Parliament.

Merchants choosing to embark on a parliamentary career usually did so later in life. One study of the period 1660-90 finds around 45 percent of first-time merchant MPs were in their forties and Table 6.2 demonstrates that this broadly holds true for Newcastle merchant MPs, who were typically around forty years old when they first entered Parliament.[998] As the data only relates to merchants who served as MPs for Newcastle, it could be questioned how representative it is of Newcastle merchants in general.[999] But it seems likely that the connection between lifecycle and political participation that emerges reflects the lifecycles of merchants that never served as MPs. In Chapter Two we saw apprentices tended to be in their early to mid-teens when commencing their service and following an eight to ten year term that was customary for Merchant Adventurers (the length of service changed when the company wished to reduce the inflow of new members), came marriage and freedom of the company in the mid to late twenties. Merchants were usually in their early thirties when first appointed mayor, sheriff or as an alderman, by which time they would have accrued life experience and proved themselves worthy of office, with age bringing seniority and strong overtones of authority essential for the ruling class to exude.[1000] Some took more practical measures.

Table 6.2: Average Age of Newcastle MPs when first appointment to various offices, 1660-1750

Event/Office Held	Average Age in Years

996 Henning, *House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 1, 8-10.
997 Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1983), 200.
998 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, Table 5.3, 202.
999 We should note that Sir William Blackett was only twenty years old when he entered Parliament in 1710 while Sir John Marlay was seventy when elected for the first time in 1661. While the tendency for Newcastle merchants to become MPs around the age of forty otherwise generally holds true, given the small sample size these two individuals serve to skew the average. The median age is thirty-eight, which encourages confidence in the mean, though the age range should be kept in mind.
1000 Michael J. Braddick, 'Administrative Performance: the Representation of Political Authority in Early Modern England', in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society*, eds. Michael J. Braddick and John Walter (Cambridge, 2001), 170-176.

Marriage	25.6
Member of Merchant Adventurers	27.6
Member of Company of Hostmen	30.3
Alderman	31.3
Sheriff	32.2
Mayor	35.4
MP	39.9

Sources: Henning, *House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 1, 532-537, 662-663; vol. 3, 21-22; David Hayton, Eveline Cruickshanks and Stuart Handley, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715* (Cambridge, 2002), vol. 3, 222-225, 474-476; vol. 1, 21; vol. 5, 926; Sedgwick, *House of Commons 1715-1754*, vol. 1, 464-465, 532; vol. 2, 20-21, 29, 261, 383, 559, 655-656.

Jonathan Roddam served as sheriff and alderman and his personal library, which was examined in Chapter Five, contained volumes by John Evelyn on public employment and Thomas Pittis, whose *Private Conference Between a Rich Alderman and a Poor Country Vicar* (1670) was aimed at those 'knowing their Obligation, better than they are acquainted with its discharge.'[1001] Reading such works would have taught merchants already aware of the social responsibilities of holding office how to go about meeting these expectations.

Newcastle merchant MPs were usually around the age of forty when first elected. According to Gauci one reason merchants entered Parliament around this time was that they established their careers during their thirties, a period during which they had little time for parliamentary office. This seems reasonable enough, but a notable drop in age is observed after 1690, and until 1754 approximately twice as many first-time merchant MPs were in their thirties as had been the case in the years 1660-90 (24-5 percent compared to 13 percent).[1002] According to Gauci this tendency to enter office earlier shows Westminster was becoming increasing attractive to commercial circles, with the growing sophistication of economic debate and the greater prominence afforded to commercial affairs incentivising merchants to take up politics.[1003] We should note, however, that the average age of MPs, merchant and non-merchant alike, was falling during this period anyway, with the proportion of MPs in the age range 31-40 increasing from 28 to 37.5 percent between the periods 1660-90 and 1690-1715.[1004] An alternative explanation for these statistics is that as trade and commerce expanded in the late seventeenth century mercantile fortunes were made earlier in life, whereupon a parliamentary career could be perused at a younger age that had previously

1001 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5; Dodds, *Register of Freemen*, 114; Thomas Pittis, *A Private Conference Between a Rich Alderman and a Poor Country Vicar Made Publick* (London, 1670), preface.

1002 Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 202 Table 5.3.

1003 Ibid., 202, Ch. 5.

1004 Henning, *House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 1, 1; Hayton, Cruickshanks and Handley, *House of Commons 1690-1715*, vol. 1, 271, 278. Hayton attributes the lowering age to greater frequency of elections and the higher turnover of seats.

been possible. Whatever the reason, the chief point to note is that for most Newcastle merchants becoming an MP usually followed on from other offices and was associated with maturity and experience.

On the face of it, then, Table 6.2 suggests a chronology in office holding that culminated in election to Parliament. There is no reason to doubt that serving as mayor, sheriff or alderman provided useful experience and influence for those in the position to run for election to Parliament. But in reality these offices were not necessarily regarded as steppingstones to Westminster. For many they were ends in themselves that satisfied the desire for political participation and we should not imagine merchants holding these offices were either hopeful or failed MPs. Most probably had little intention to enter Parliament which involved considerable financial outlay and made demands on one's time once elected, which must have been particularly unwelcome for active merchants.[1005] Indeed in 1699 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Montagu, asked leading Newcastle merchant Sir William Blackett to join the Treasury board but Blackett felt his concerns in the north would suffer if he accepted.[1006]

Sixteen individuals represented Newcastle in Parliament in the years 1660-1750 and using the biographical sketches offered in The *History of the Commons* we can make several generalisations about them. An idea of how active Newcastle merchant MPs were in the period 1660-90 can be seen from Henning's volume which measures levels of activity in relation to how many committees MPs were appointed to with respect to the overall number convened. Henning ascribes five levels of activity, ranging from 'very active' to 'no committees'.[1007] Comparing 1660 to 1690, there was a slight change in the proportion of each group, with 'very active' members increasing from 3 percent to 5 percent and 'inactive' members falling from 54 percent to 44 percent. Those giving no speeches rose from 68 percent to 74 percent.[1008] In both cases the 'inactive' category covers the largest proportion, meaning a typical MP made no recorded speeches and was only minimally involved. Kyle raises some issues over Henning's methodology and points out that attendance at committees was often poor while those that did turn up had not always been appointed in the first place.

1005 Grassby, *Business Community*, 233; Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 205-206.
1006 Mark Blackett-Ord, 'Blackett, Sir William, First Baronet (1657-1705), Landowner and Mine Owner', *ODNB*; A. W Purdue, *The Ship That Came Home: The Story of a Northern Dynasty* (London, 2004), 29, 35.
1007 Henning, *House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 1, xii-xiii.
1008 Ibid., 82.

Nevertheless, Kyle's main finding, that attendance at the Commons was poor, supports Henning and broadly describes the modest input of Newcastle merchant MPs.[1009]

On the whole Newcastle merchant MPs were not particularly energetic in their involvement in parliamentary affairs. Henning found no obvious explanation for inactivity. Active members tended to hold firm political convictions and have a wide knowledge of constitutional and legal matters, which encourages the question of whether we can invert these qualities for the inactive group and suggest indifference was due to a lack of firm political views and a weak grasp of legal issues. It seems unlikely. For one thing MPs tended to be well educated with 45 percent of all those elected between 1660 and 1690 having attended the Inns of Court, meaning their grasp of legal matters was better than most.[1010] Plenty of evidence also exists to suggest that Newcastle MPs held firm political views. For example, during the Civil War, merchants who would later represent Newcastle in Parliament such as Sir John Marlay and Robert Ellison adopted strong opposing positions in the conflict. This proves their willingness to fight for a political cause, yet, once in Parliament, they were far less assertive and largely inactive.[1011] To give another example, Sir William Blackett (1657-1705) was first elected in 1685 and was soon opposing James II's policy of controlling the boroughs, a move that saw him, along with the mayor, sheriff and several aldermen and members of the common council, removed by the king in 1687. Although he was reinstated in 1688 as part of an attempt at reconciliation, he had made the switch from Tory to Whig. This deflection suggests Blackett had solid enough political convictions to oppose his father who had been a 'strong Tory' and it is telling that in January 1689, when he was elected MP alongside Sir Ralph Carr, both were said to 'still persist in their obstinacy and will not pray for the Prince and Princess of Orange, but with poisoned and inveterate words declare an abhorrence of their association.'[1012] His position therefore appears to have been a Whig who disapproved of James II yet opposed his forced removal. Swearing allegiance to William III required breaking the vow already made to James II, something many people agonised over, Blackett included, who held firm on the issue.[1013]

1009 Chris R. Kyle, '"It Will be a Scandal to Show What we Have Done With Such a Number": House of Commons Committee Attendance Lists, 1616-1628', in *Parliament, Politics and Elections 1604-1648*, ed. Chris R. Kyle, Camden Fifth Series, vol. 17 (Cambridge, 2001), 179-235.

1010 Henning, *House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 1, 58-60.

1011 Richard Welford, ed. *Records of the Committees for Compounding*, Surtees Society vol. 111 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1905), xx-xxi; A. W. Purdue, *Merchants and Gentry in North-East England, 1650-1830: The Carrs and the Ellisons* (Sunderland, 1999), 9-10; Howell, *Puritan Revolution*, 215; Blair, 'Mayors', 57; Henning, *House of Commons 1660-90*, vol. 3, 21-22; M. A. Richardson, *The Borderer's Table Book*, vol. 1 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1846), 270.

1012 Purdue, *Ship That Came Home*, 35; *The Manuscripts of S. H. Le Fleming, Esq. of Rydal Hall*, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Twelfth Report, Appendix Pt. VII (London, 1890), 234.

1013 Julian Hoplitt, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727* (Oxford, 2000), 34.

Blackett was clearly a man with political views and with his son, William Blackett, second baronet (1690-1728), we find more evidence of political convictions in an inactive MP. An early interest in politics is seen in his election to a Newcastle seat at the young age of twenty and he remained a representative until his death in 1728. Yet there is no record of significant activity in the 1710-11 session and despite being a member of the cartel controlling the coal trade in the northeast, surprisingly there is no evidence that he opposed a bill designed to put a stop to such combinations when consulted in 1710.[1014] He voted for the French commerce bill in the 1713 session and was returned for Newcastle unopposed later in the year, though he left no trace in the records to indicate he participated any further in the 1713 Parliament.[1015] He was, nevertheless, regarded as a strong Tory and though he did not actually join the 1715 Jacobite uprising, his sympathies with the cause landed him in trouble. Regarded with suspicion, he was favoured by neither side and shunned by the town elite.[1016] William Cotesworth, a merchant living at Gateshead Park and a dedicated Whig, spoke of the 'good deal of Pains' he had taken to have Blackett 'secured from going over to the enemy' which suggests some basis to the claims of involvement in the rising.[1017] Indeed, in his history of the rebellion Patten calls it 'a Secret' whether or not William was 'actually engag'd' but adds that his interest in Newcastle was 'very considerable' with a 'great many' colliers and keelmen in his service who were ordered to arm themselves and be ready to go 'wherever he should direct.'[1018] Suspicions over his allegiance continued to cause trouble for Blackett and he was forced to flee to London when government troops occupied Newcastle in late 1715. While there he 'had the Honour to Kiss his Majesty's Hand', a well-timed gesture of loyalty perhaps, but his popularity in Newcastle was undiminished and when he returned from London two weeks later he was 'welcom'd by the Ringing of Bells.'[1019] Even if he did not wholeheartedly embrace the Jacobite cause, and it must be said that as a member of such a prominent wealthy merchant family the decision to do so would have been a huge gamble, Blackett was not indifferent to political matters. Indeed, like his father before him, as an influential member in Newcastle society his actions helped create politics in the town, which could not be said were he wholly disinterested in national affairs.

1014 Hayton, Cruickshanks and Handley, *House of Commons 1690-1715*, vol. 3, 224.
1015 Ibid.
1016 Purdue, *Ship That Came Home*, 42-49; Hayton, Cruickshanks and Handley, *House of Commons 1690-1715*, vol. 3, 224-245.
1017 'Extract of a Letter from William Cotesworth, Esq., to Henry Liddell Esq.' reproduced in *Diary of Mary Countess Cowper, Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wale 1714-1720* (London, 1864), Appendix C, 187.
1018 Robert Patten, *The History of the Rebellion in the Year 1715*, 3rd ed. (London, 1745), 23.
1019 *NC* no. 695 Jan. 7-9, 1716; *NC* no. 701 Jan. 21-3, 1716.

Nathaniel Johnson is another case in point. He had held various offices in the Americas before returning to Newcastle in 1673 whereupon he was appointed a justice of the peace for Durham in 1674 and collector for the Hearth Tax in Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland and County Durham in the following year.[1020] Johnson was elected MP in 1680. Despite a modest input in parliamentary affairs he evidently held firm political views. Following the expiration of the Hearth Tax farm he became governor of the Leeward Islands and proved a dutiful servant of royal policy. His loyalty to the Stuart family led him to resign rather than swear allegiance to William and Mary, telling the Board of Trade that he could not 'qualify' himself 'for continuance therein' and offering to return to England to support James Stuart.[1021] '[M]y intention is all for the King's service', he said, which appears to have been sincere as others praised his 'courage and conduct'.[1022]

Taken together, the evidence suggests inactivity in Parliament does not imply a lack of political convictions amongst Newcastle merchants. One reason why merchants might not have been overly active was the need to attend to business in Newcastle. Travelling to and from London placed considerable demands on a busy merchant and it is reasonable to expect most put upholding their trade interests before attending to parliamentary affairs. One way round the problem was to delegate tasks to suitably experienced apprentices. As we saw with Ralph Jackson in Chapter Two, an experienced apprentice could significantly lighten the daily duties of a merchant, such as chasing payments and overseeing the loading of the keels. Furthermore, fourteen of the sixteen men who represented Newcastle between 1660 and 1750 were married, which meant their wives could oversee business matters in their absence.[1023] Defoe spoke in favour of this practice and advised each tradesmen to 'make his wife so much

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1020 Alexander Moore, 'Johnson, Nathaniel (4 Apr. 1644-1714)' in *American National Biography*, eds. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, vol. 12 (Oxford, 1999), 105-106; W. L. Grant, ed. *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, *Colonial Series*, vol. 1, *1613-1680* (London, 1908), 503; Henning, *House of Commons 1660-1690*, vol. 2, 655-656.

1021 SW. L. Grant, ed. *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, *Colonial Series*, vol. 2 *1680-1720* (London, 1910), 114; *CSPCS, A&WI, 1685-1688*, 510-513; *CSPCS, A&WI, 1702*, 431; *CSPCS, A&WI, 1702-3*, 549.*CSPCS, A&WI, 1689-1692*, 43. Moore, 'Johnson, Nathaniel', 105-106.

1022 *CSPCS, A&WI, 1702*, 421; *CSPCS, A&WI, 1685-1688*, 512.

1023 Apprentice merchants who experienced the death of their master often served the remainder of their time under their master's wife, as happened with William Cotesworth, a leading merchant in the Tyneside coal industry during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. See: Joyce Ellis, 'Risk, Capital, and Credit on Tyneside, *circa* 1690-1780', in *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism: Essays in Business and Industrial History in Honour of Peter Mathias*, eds. Kristine Bruland and Patrick O'Brien (Oxford, 1998), 96. This describes how Cotesworth's abilities had 'won him the favour of his master's widow while serving out his term, so that she brought him into the family business as a partner', which strongly implies his master's widow was familiar with business matters. It is also noteworthy how Anne Clavering, wife of Henry Liddell whose father Sir Henry Liddell is one of the merchant MPs discussed below, was knowledgeable about the coal trade and kept her relative James Clavering up to date with political events from London. See: H. T. Dickinson, ed. *The Correspondence of Sir James Clavering*, Surtees Society vol. 178 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1967), 1-134.

acquainted with his trade, and so much mistress of the managing part of it, that she might be able to carry it on if she pleased'.[1024] Although Defoe probably did not have the wives of wealthy coal merchants in mind, other writers argued that merchant wives should be familiar with accounting, bookkeeping and the trading partners of her husband to cover for his absence or, ultimately, his death.[1025] It would appear that some Newcastle merchants followed this advice. Upon the death of Richard Forster in 1669, his widow Mary informed his employer in the government that her husband had been buried 'on Thursday' and that she was 'ready to correspond as he formerly did' and continue 'to discharge the business'.[1026] Exactly what 'business' this refers to is unclear, but Mary obviously had a good knowledge of her husband's correspondences which enabled her to pick up where he left off so soon after his death. As can be seen from the will of Joshua Middleton, not all merchants involved their wives in their business affairs. He states that as the greatest part of his estate was in trade and partnerships it wold be 'very troublesome' for his wife Jane to 'manage the same without hazard and Danger of great loss.'[1027] But given that many Newcastle merchants appointed their wives executors in their wills, it must have been more common for wives to have at least some knowledge of the business dealings of their husbands.

Overall we may surmise that merchant MPs were inactive in Parliament through choice rather than necessity. They were least inclined to act in day-to-day parliamentary matters but adopted firmer political stances on the big issues of the day. However, when it came to local affairs we find Newcastle merchants were far more active. More specifically, it was matters of local trade that animated merchants and spurred them to take action. Earlier it was claimed that there was an expectation that those in positions of power would defend and further the collective interests of the town, something that partly offset the uneven distribution of wealth and status. Newcastle MPs well recognised their responsibilities in this regard and often acted in concert with their guild to protect local trade. For example, in 1656 Sir William Blackett (c.1620-80), a leading merchant who served as alderman, sheriff, mayor and MP for Newcastle during his career, accompanied three other delegates to London on behalf of the Merchant Adventurers to petition Parliament against potential threats to the

1024 Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (London, 1726), 291.

1025 Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996), 126-44; Mary Prior, 'Women and the Urban Economy: Oxford 1500-1800', in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London, 1985), 53-88; Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Classes: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, 1989), 159. While marriage made it theoretically impossible for married women to run independent businesses, the doctrine of 'separate estates' enabled them to do just this, on condition that the husband consented, which usually involved contracts being drawn up prior to marriage.

1026 *CSPD, 1668-1669*, 265; DUL, DPR/I/1/1669/F8/1-2.

1027 BI, YDA11, Registered Wills, vol. 75, ff. 272-274.

independence of the company.[1028] In the year following his election as MP for the town in 1674, he again acted during the company's ongoing dispute with the London branch which was heard by the Royal Council; he was also present when a compromise between the two was discussed in the same year.[1029] William Carr (1664-1720) similarly served as alderman, mayor and MP for Newcastle and he too acted with the Merchant Adventurers to protect trade in the town. In 1680 he informed the company court that the Russia Company intended to place new impositions on goods 'contrary to the agreement made wth this Fellowshipp' whereupon it was resolved that attempts would be made to encourage York, Hull 'and other places' to 'stand by this Company' to oppose the measures.[1030] Many northern towns felt London dominated matters of commerce and this episode shows that by working with their guilds, Newcastle merchants sought collective unity as a means of defending local rights. It is also noteworthy that merchants in different towns would consider uniting, as more commonly we learn of rivalries, with Newcastle particularly jealous of neighbouring Gateshead and Sunderland. This reiterates the earlier point that it was local rather than national affairs that motivated provincial merchants to act.

Making this point is not to overlook the deep rivalries that existed between merchants or the extent to which self-interest compelled many to act for 'collective interests'.[1031] But the key point is that merchants were seen to confront outside threats, whether it was James II, the London Merchant Adventurers or the developing port of Sunderland. These observations have implications for the conclusions reached by Wilson in her study of popular politics in eighteenth-century provincial English towns.[1032] Using Newcastle and Norwich as case studies, Wilson identifies a popular enthusiasm for trade and empire which were seen to underpin the prosperity of England. Promoting these causes led townsfolk to seek influence in national affairs, yet, crucially, when it came to forming viewpoints, rather than looking to London or leading politicians, people drew their own conclusions. This resulted in vibrant urban political cultures and a sense of being 'the people' upon whom governments were reliant for power. From the evidence presented here we can add that in Newcastle the merchant oligarchy ultimately drew its authority from 'the people' in the sense that it responded to expectations that it would defend their rights and promote their concerns with

1028 Purdue, *Ship That Came Home*, 23-24.
1029 Ibid., 26.
1030 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 71. The Russia Company held the monopoly on trade to Muscovy and was also known as the Muscovy Company.
1031 On rivalries see Joyce Ellis, 'The Poisoning of William Cotesworth, 1725', *History Today*, 28, 11 (1978), 752-757.
1032 Wilson, *Sense of the People*.

regards trade and matters affecting national prosperity. Whilst their actions did not justify the existence of the merchant oligarchy in the eyes of most, they at least went some way to upholding the idea that authority carried responsibilities. Social relations within Newcastle were thus conditioned by the expectation that the entrenched elite, however much resented, ultimately had a responsibility to the rest of the population to protect the prosperity of the town. Furthermore, it was expected that the wealthiest would provide relief for the needy, and it this topic that concerns us next.

6.5 The role of merchant charity in social relations

Ellis makes the suggestion that in Newcastle charity was seen by town officials as a means of preventing potential social unrest occasioned by the highly uneven distribution of wealth throughout the town population.[1033] The aim here is to ask to what extent merchants contributed to the provision of charity by making bequests in their wills and expand Ellis' hypothesis by arguing that merchants made donations for more varied reasons than preserving social order. In doing so charity will be used as part of a wider discussion of how the political inequality represented by the merchant elite conditioned social relations in Newcastle.

Jordan offers a sweeping take on the topic of charity with his extensive study of philanthropy in England during the period 1480-1660. Although his failure to factor in the effects of inflation significantly reduces the impact of his conclusions, his point that charitable giving increased across his chosen period remains valid, albeit on a much smaller scale that he believed.[1034] Particularly noteworthy is his argument that in London the affluent merchant community led the way in their liberal approach to charity and their commitment to increasing opportunities for the poor. Charity was not simply about 'indiscriminate largesse' but the foundation of trusts that sought improvement in the long term: 'English society was being remoulded' and the 'decisive force in this was neither government, church nor gentry, but Puritan London merchants.'[1035]

1033 Ellis, 'Dynamic Society', 216.

1034 W. K. Jordan, *The Charities of London, 1480-1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society* (Hamden, 1974); G. R. Elton, review of W. K. Jordan, *The Charities of London, 1480-1660* (London, 1960), *The Historical Journal*, 4, 2 (1961), 229-230; Paul Slack, *Poverty & Policy in Tudor & Stuart England* (London, 1988), 162-164.

1035 Christopher Hill, review of W. K. Jordan *The Charities of London, 1480-1660* (London, 1960), *The Spectator*, vol. 205 (6908), Nov. 18 1960, 789.

Attitudes towards the provision of charity and poor relief did indeed change a good deal across the early modern period. Slack argues that the poor increasingly came to be seen as 'a threat to be controlled' or an opportunity for social improvement rather than an object of charity.[1036] He explains that the godly reformation occurring in English towns between 1560 and 1640 tried to combine the reformation of manners with the creation of institutions to provide relief for the poor, as seen with the creation of the Old Poor Laws. However, by the mid-seventeenth century, notions of 'improvement' gained ground over hopes for a total overhaul of society. 'Improvement' implied a more piecemeal and gradual process accompanied by an increasingly secular and profit driven view of the poor, coloured, in turn, by the notion of the 'public good' used to legitimise new initiatives and projects.[1037] Attitudes to poverty had not hardened too far though, as whilst efforts to search out poverty were partly motivated by the desire to 'identify and supress disorder', there was a genuine desire to reduce 'misery and deprivation' in England.[1038]

Slack's views have important implications for the present task. According to his argument, merchants making bequests to charities did so with an eye towards the social good as much as for religious reasons. This is not to overlook the role of piety entirely. Religion has a long history of encouraging merchants to make charitable bequests in their wills, as demonstrated by Kermode in her study of medieval York, Hull and Beverley. She found that around half of sampled merchant wills made arrangements for funeral doles and institutions such as hospitals and alms houses. Over 90 percent made bequests to specific parishes or friars; others left money for mortuary gowns, tithes or candles. Overall, in the period 1370-1510 'virtually every merchant testator left money to the church.'[1039] The problem with this kind of analysis, as Kermode readily acknowledges, is that equating the act of giving and the sum involved with levels of piety is potentially misleading. Medieval merchants might have shared the belief in purgatory, but charity at the time of death often had more to do with confirming social status and meeting religious conventions and 'philanthropic fashions' of the day as it did with lifelong piety. With this in mind, she concludes that medieval merchants in the northeast of England were not 'particularly pious or honourable.'[1040]

Kermode's point that affirming social status was a motive behind charity is supported in the work of Cavallo. Focussing on Turin in early modern Italy, Cavallo argues that more

1036 Slack, *Poverty & Policy*, 205.
1037 Paul Slack, *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998).
1038 Slack, *Poverty & Policy*, 206.
1039 Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, 122-124.
1040 Ibid., 153.

than anything charity was an expression of elite competiveness and an assertion of social status.[1041] This interpretation stands in contrast to Slack who, as noted, identifies the 'improvement' of society as the key motivate behind charity in early modern England. Doubtless many benefactors were motivated by the social recognition earned from donating. The *Newcastle Courant* often published details of merchant charity to advertise their generosity and present their actions as worthy of emulation. The Company of Merchant Adventurers also celebrated donations by detailing the gifts alongside the arms of the benefactor in the hope others would be inspired to follow suit. Publically honouring donors was evidently seen as a spur to further charity which only makes sense if this recognition was desirable, substantiating the claims of Cavallo. But the quest for social status was only one motive amongst many that coexisted in the same individual.[1042] We can never know precisely why some gave to charity while others did not. For those that did, on the whole many chose to do so for reasons of piety, at least until the mid-seventeenth century when a more secular attitude towards charity was taking hold. Pious donations did not disappear after this point, but giving was seen less as a religious duty and more as a means of improving society. Regarding the desire to assert status, whilst this can never be entirely overlooked, surely the essential point is that seeking social approval and having a genuine commitment to the 'improvement' of society were not mutually exclusive. A large bequest might reinforce the reputation of the benefactor who nevertheless had a longstanding belief in improving society.

To see how Newcastle merchants contributed to the changing picture of charity, all extant wills for the period 1660-1750 have been examined, a total of 234.[1043] Incidences of charity are taken to be specific bequests made to parishes, local schools or simply 'the poor'. Five merchants made arrangements to provide funding for members of the Merchant Adventurers and these have also been included. Table 6.3 provides an overview of the data. The data shows the proportion of merchants making bequests to charities declined in the 1680s and 1690s before rising again in the early decades of the eighteenth century, only to fall once again to the point where just 3.7 percent of wills made in the 1740s include donations.

1041 Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789* (Cambridge, 1995).

1042 It is worth noting that the quest for social status was once seen as the driving force behind the consumer revolution, only to fall from favour in recent years. Now there is more support for the suggestion that a diverse range of factors drove demand. See Chapter One above.

1043 All documents giving the occupation of the deceased as 'merchant' have been crosschecked with merchant guild records listing members and included for analysis. See above, Chapter One 26.

Table 6.3: Proportion of Newcastle merchant wills containing charitable bequests, 1660-1750

Decade	Wills (N)	Proportion of wills containing bequests to charity (%)
1660s	32	21.9
1670s	30	23.3
1680s	17	17.6
1690s	28	14.3
1700s	26	19.2
1710s	26	23.1
1720s	30	10
1730s	18	5.6
1740s	27	3.7
TOTAL	**234**	**15.8**

Sources: DUL, DPR, Wills and Probate; TNA Wills and Probate; BI, YDA11, Probate Records.

Although accounting for these trends cannot be done with precision, it is significant that the cost of feeding a Newcastle family followed the national upwards trend in the first half of the seventeenth century before easing in the 1680s when the cost of food fell by almost a quarter and the availability of work increased as the coal trade peaked. Under these favourable conditions a keelman could almost cover the basic food costs of his family, though when trade slackened in the 1690s this became more difficult.[1044] Comparing these trends with the data in Table 6.3 it would appear that fewer merchants made provisions for charity during the more prosperous 1680s but in the early eighteenth century, following the reduction of trade in the 1690s, donations increased. There is no reason to doubt that merchants witnessing the hardships brought about by falling incomes in the 1690s felt the urge to help but this explanation is unlikely to account for the near disappearance of bequests in the 1730s and 1740s, with just one will in each decade making a charitable gift. Clearly there is more behind these statistics.

It is significant that data assembled from a sample of London wills shows that whereas 70 percent contained charitable bequests in the 1690s, by the mid-eighteenth century this proportion had fallen to 39.3 percent.[1045] Comparing the provision of charity in London to Newcastle is only of limited value given the difference in scale; nevertheless, Andrew's point that the eighteenth century saw an increased priority of property rights over claims to charity is worth noting, given the extensive estates many Newcastle merchants built up over the course of their lives. Andrew argues that this shift in opinion was codified in the

1044 Andy Burn, 'Seasonal Work and Welfare in an Early Industrial Town: Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1700', *Continuity and Change*, 32, 2 (2017), 164.

1045 Donna T. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (New Jersey, 1989), 46.

Mortmain Act of 1736 which placed inheritance over benevolence, forbidding charitable bequests of land one year prior to death. Leaving funds by bequest was still allowed, but 'legislative, as well as popular, opinion found all such action suspect.'[1046]

Valid as this argument is, it has to be accepted that wills do not represent private charity in its entirety, merely a small part of it. Any household charity made over the course of the lifetime remains undocumented as do 'casual favours' and hidden networks of support.[1047] What wills are helpful for is charting the changing nature of charity. Research shows that, whilst fewer wills contained traditional small, one-off gifts and funeral doles by 1700, charitable gifts offered at the time of death had not so much declined as diversified, with household charity and a widening range of benevolences offered during the lifetime becoming more popular. Endowments and large testamentary bequests to parishes and institutions were also on the rise.[1048] Public welfare was likewise expanding and by 1700 people were giving more to the poor than ever before, with the greatest part coming through the organised system of welfare rather than private charity.[1049] As benefit societies and charitable organisations began to mushroom in the eighteenth century there were yet more avenues for charity to flow through.[1050] In 1700 the Keelmen Hospital opened in Newcastle (see below) and in 1747 a scheme was put forward by the corporation to erect a workhouse to provide employment for the town poor, said to be 'very numerous' and 'a heavy Charge upon the Inhabitants of each respective parish' at the time.[1051] So whilst fewer Newcastle merchants chose to make charitable bequests in their wills after 1720, charity as such was not declining. Rather it was developing in a way that included fewer personal bequests made in wills and greater support for infrastructure, a shift towards institutional charity reflecting the polite and less face-to-face interaction with the poor associated with eighteenth-century capitalist social relations.

To gain a more rounded picture of merchant charity in Newcastle, Table 6.4 provides a breakdown of the recipients of each bequest.

Table 6.4: Recipients of merchant charity 1660-1750

1046 Ibid., 48.
1047 Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), 3-4.
1048 Ibid., Ch. 4 esp. 140-141.
1049 Slack, *Poverty & Policy*, 172.
1050 Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, 141.
1051 *NC* no. 2811 Oct. 31-Nov. 7, 1747.

Recipient	Number of bequests	Bequests as percentage of total	Total valuation of bequests made 1660-1750
St Nicholas' Parish	16	20.8	£1,584
St John's Parish	11	14.3	£937
St Andrew's Parish	8	10.4	£1,391
All Saints Parish	24	31.2	£1,492
'Poor of Newcastle'	5	6.5	£55
Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle	5	6.5	£603
Other	8	10.4	£439
TOTAL	**77**	**100.1***	**£6,501**

*Due to rounding
Sources: Table 6.3 dataset.

The recipient categories are devised from the wording used in the wills, which can be rather vague and unspecific, such as leaving money to the 'poor of Newcastle'. How this money was eventually spent and by whom is difficult to ascertain without more information. Elsewhere, the bequests to parishes were generally listed as just that and few contain details on how the money was to be spent. But even if this was known and an attempt made to record every specific use of merchant charity, due to the relatively small sample size the large number of categories would make it difficult to analyse and draw general conclusions. Unlike Table 6.3, each bequest is counted, so where an individual makes multiple donations each appears as a separate entry in the data. Most merchant charity was set aside for the four parishes of Newcastle. Bequests to 'other' recipients were mostly made to parishes close to the town, such as Gateshead and Ryton, likely signifying some familial connection. For each recipient a total valuation of all bequests received is given in the final column, though it has to be stressed that these figures are only intended as approximations. The reason for this is that whilst most gifts took the form of one-off sums, some were perpetual, a typical example being Matthew White who requested that St Nicholas' and All Saints' receive thirty shillings 'a year for ever'.[1052] Such bequests appear in the data as cumulative totals calculated from the year of death until 1750, meaning the figure £6,501 refers to the total value of charity received from one-off and perpetual gifts across the entire period. One drawback to this approach is that when a merchant intended his cash bequest to be 'putt out att interest' with all profits going to the recipient, it is impossible to know how much this yielded over

1052 DUL, DPR/I/1/1716/W2/1-2.

subsequent years. In such cases only the initial sum has been counted.[1053] We also need to note that inflation would have changed valuations across the period covered.[1054]

To give some context it would be helpful to place the data alongside figures detailing the provision of poor relief in Newcastle. Unfortunately prior to 1750 no parish book contains any record of relief.[1055] However, that the potential demand for charity was large can be seen in data from the 1665 Hearth Tax, discussed in Chapter Four. It was stressed that using hearth numbers as a proxy for wealth is of limited use as the correlation is not exact. Exemption rates hold more promise but it was noted that after the tax was introduced in 1662 exemption was increasingly granted on the basis that the property yielded a low annual rent (twenty shillings) rather than for reasons of poverty. As annual rents were lower in Northumberland and parts of Newcastle than southern counties, we can expect higher exemption rates in the former.[1056] Nevertheless, it remains significant that 41 percent of Newcastle households were excused paying the tax in 1665.[1057] Exemption might not be the same as poverty but it signifies a sparse living close to its margins. For households in this position a sudden change of circumstances could quickly require the need of parish relief. Even households eligible to pay the tax could find themselves in need of assistance, such as the numerous keelmen whose employment was conditioned by the seasonal nature of the coal trade, resulting in lean winter months.

For many such households parish relief prevented, or at least reduced the experience of, poverty. Most working families enjoyed a 'relatively comfortable life' during the late seventeenth century but this was due to the 'matrix of relief in operation to keep labourers and keelmen alive'.[1058] Aside from parish relief, this 'matrix of relief' included shopkeepers providing flexible credit, the corporation seeking extra work for the underemployed and Hostmen arranging loans to see struggling keelmen through the slack winter months.[1059] The financial outlay of relief cannot be known but must have been considerable; indeed, after

1053 See, for example, DUL, DPR/I/1/1694/R17/1-2.

1054 Furthermore, not all bequests were realised upon the death of the testator. A disputed will could lead to all manner of problems as executors tried to sort out competing interests and this could result in the bequest failing to be realised. Outstanding debts owed by the testator might also negate a generous charitable donation. See: John Addy, *Death, Money and the Vultures: Inheritance and Avarice 1660-1760* (London, 1992).

1055 Burn, 'Seasonal Work', 174.

1056 Adrian Green, 'Learning the Tricks of the Northumberland Hearth Tax', in *A Northumbrian Miscellany: Historical Essays in Memory of Constance M. Fraser*, eds. Elizabeth Ashton, Michael Barke and Eleanor George (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2015), 106-122; Also see above, 110.

1057 See above, 110. The Newcastle exemption rate is comparable to Exeter which had a rate of 40 percent in 1672 yet some way behind Norwich, where 59 percent of households were excused payment in 1671. In contrast, Bristol and York had exemptions rates around 20 percent at this time.

1058Burn, 'Seasonal Work', 176.

1059 Ibid.

Christmas 1656 the mayor had to borrow an *additional* £500 to aid the poor.[1060] In comparison the sum of £6,501 offered by the town merchants over nine decades seems modest. As just thirty-nine individuals were responsible for the entire sum it would seem that those who did make charitable bequests in their wills were somewhat more liberal. As might be expected though, wealthier merchants tended to leave more and with a relatively small sample size the data is disproportionately affected by large one-off gifts and annual donations that amassed into considerable sums over the years. At the upper end of the scale we find Sir William Blackett leaving the enormous sum of £1,000 for the vicars of St Nicholas' and St Andrew's in 1704 and John Rumney leaving £250 in 1694.[1061] Such amounts were far from typical yet act to skew the results and disguise the tendency for charitable gifts to be for much smaller sums, typified by merchants like Thomas Harrison who bequeathed the 'poore needy householders' of St Nicholas' parish thirty shillings in 1669.[1062] Slightly larger amounts were not unusual with 60 percent of bequests made for £50 or under. Considering an average keelman earned around £10 annually in the 1690s and needed £11-£13 to feed a family of five over the course of the year, one individual could significantly ease the needs of a struggling household.[1063]

The Newcastle poor were the chief beneficiaries of merchant charity. Parish churches received donations on the understanding that the money would be distributed amongst those most in need. To underline the point some merchants stressed their contribution was intended for 'the most aged[,] decrepit and neccesitous' of the parish, others the 'poor housekeepers'.[1064] Such instructions tell us something about the motives of the giver. Wills are private documents not intended for public display. Whilst the bequests they made would have been made public and motivated many to give in order to gain social recognition, there is no reason to see this as the only, or indeed prime, concern of all donors. As these examples indicate, some donors had an interest in seeing that those most in need help of received it. Other merchants set aside money for schooling. This was a popular cause for merchants and their contributions helped further the provision of education in Newcastle. This can be seen with the foundation of a charity school in St Ann's parish in 1682.[1065] Although the school was established by the corporation and continued to be partly supported by town revenues, from the outset the Hostmen were involved. The town mayor, invariably a merchant himself,

1060 Ibid.
1061 DUL, DPR/I/1/1669/H7/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1694/R17/1-2.
1062 DUL, DPR/I/1/1669/H7/1-2.
1063 Burn, 'Work and Welfare', 163.
1064 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R10/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1716/R1/1.
1065 Mackenzie, *Descriptive and Historical Account*, vol. 1, 451.

served as school governor while the governor of the Hostmen acted as his assistant; the company also donated £10 annually for the provision of a schoolmaster.[1066]

The largest contribution towards education came from Sir William Blackett. Two-thirds of the interest accruing from his £1,000 legacy made in 1704 was allocated for apprenticing and educating thirty poor boys in All Saints' parish whose parents were unable to pay church rates. The money endowed a charity school that was to teach boys to the point they could 'Read English and repeat the Church Catichisme without booke', whereupon the money would fund the next deserving child.[1067] In 1728 Sir William Blackett, son of the founder, added to the fund in his will with the intention that pupils would also be clothed; a century later the school was still going strong.[1068] In recognition of the family's support, at Blackett's funeral pupils 'belonging to the school … supported by his Liberty' led his funeral procession through Newcastle, newly 'cloath'd in Grey with black Caps' followed by twenty-six mourners. In its entirety the procession included representatives from the clergy, the mayor, aldermen, common council together with numerous members of Blackett's household and upwards of 200 gentlemen and 2,000 freemen.[1069] The death of a prominent inhabitant usually occasioned a great spectacle but there is more to the event than this. Lavish funerals were a testament to the status and worldly success of the deceased and the prominent position given to the pupils of the charity school emphasised the family's contribution to Newcastle society. Such charitable efforts were highly regarded and celebrated accordingly. This example demonstrates the earlier point that acquiring social recognition from charitable donations was not mutually exclusive from the desire to further the improvement of society.

In the same year Blackett endowed the school in St Andrew's parish, both St Nicolas' parish and St Johns' parish acquired schools of their own, soon to be followed by All Saints' parish where one was founded by public subscription in 1709.[1070] Several merchants were early supporters of the latter and made donations in their wills. In 1710 William Harrison left £10 for the charity school 'lately sett up … for teaching poor children' and three years later William Ramsay stated that the interest accruing from £50 should go to the 'benefit of y^{e} schollars of y^{e} Charity School' in All Saints' parish.[1071] In 1718 Thomas Elliott bequeathed

1066 T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 722; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 725; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 740; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 743. In 1706 the company ordered an enquiry into whether this legacy was 'duely managed and executed'. See Dendy, *Records of the Company of Hostmen*, 168.

1067 BI, YDA11, Registered Wills, vol. 63, f. 196-199^{v}.

1068 William Parsons and William White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the Counties of Durham and Northumberland* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1827), vol. 1, lxxvii.

1069 *NC* no. 181 Oct. 12, 1728.

1070 Parsons and White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer*, lxxvii.

1071 DUL, DPR/I/1/1710/H4/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1716/R1/1.

the school the interest from £100 to assist the 'poor boys' in their education and a further £20 came from Joseph Colpitts in 1729 and £50 from John Simpson three years later.[1072] In total the school received £765 in benefactions between 1709 and 1730, of which £197 can be identified as coming from Newcastle merchants, meaning they alone provided one quarter of all donations.[1073] Regardless of the precise motives of each individual, the key point remains that Newcastle merchants helped extend the provision of education in the town. The sums pledged are proof enough, as a century later, in 1827, it was noted that the annual sermon for the benefit of the charity school in All Saints' parish 'generally produces upwards of £20' while the annual cost of clothing thirty-four boys in St Andrew's school was said to be £80.[1074] Compared to these costs, the sums donated by merchants in the early eighteenth century represent a significant contribution towards the provision of education in Newcastle.

Aside from charitable gifts to schools and the poor, five merchants made bequests to the Company of Merchant Adventurers. Some gave money for the purpose of aiding up and coming merchants to establish themselves in trade. This was the intention of John Rumney who donated £100 in 1694 for 'some younger tradeing member' to borrow free of interest for a period of three years.[1075] William Carr and Joseph Atkinson each donated £100 for the same purpose, only they allowed five years for repayment.[1076] The annual bequest of £3 Thomas Davison gifted the company in 1675 was for a slightly different reason. As well as being an aldermen and serving as mayor in 1669, Davison was governor of the Merchant Adventurers when he made his will and stipulated that the money was to be distributed amongst the 'poore Brethen and sisters' of the company.[1077] Evidently this was a cause his family felt worthwhile as twenty years later Thomas's son Timothy left £300 with similar instructions, emphasising members 'that have been traders and fallen into decay [were] to have preference before others.'[1078] The company advertised donations like these in the hope others would 'follow theire good example', ordering in 1674 for the arms of two earlier donors to be 'hung up in the Court for a memorial of soe worthy benefactors'.[1079] The arms of Carr, Rumney and Atkinson together with those of the Davisons all adorned the walls of the Merchants' Court and contained details of their legacies, which doubtless elevated their status within the

1072 DUL, DPR/I/1/1718/E1/1-2; DUL, DPR/I/1/1739/C14/1; DUL, DPR/I/1/1732/S11/1-2.
1073 Mackenzie, *Descriptive and Historical Account, v*ol. 1, 448.
1074 Parsons and White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer*, lxxvii.
1075 DUL, DPR/I/1/1694/R17/1-2.
1076 DUL, DPR/I/1/1660/C1/1-6; DUL, DPR/I/1/1713/A6/1.
1077 DUL, DPR/I/1/1676/D6/1-2.
1078 DUL, DPR/I/1/1696/D4/1.
1079 Dendy, *Records of the Merchant Adventurers*, Surtees Society vol. 93, 218. For these earlier benefactors see: Barbara Harbottle and Elizabeth M. Halcrow, 'Merchant Charities of Newcastle upon Tyne', *AA*, Fourth Series, 30 (1952), 69-79.

company.[1080] Was receiving this recognition their prime objective? Again, the answer probably lies in mixed motives. It is notable that the merchants making bequests to the company all left other charitable donations, as this suggests that receiving recognition amongst their peers by having their donations displayed in the court was not their only motive. Had this been the case, we might expect more single but larger bequests to the company.

Not all testamentary bequests were made by men. Ann Davison outlived her husband by around twenty-three years and in a codicil to her 1719 will stipulated that the surplus of her estate was to be 'divided amongst y^{e} poor' by her executors.[1081] Ann had been married to the merchant Benjamin Davison, brother of Thomas and Timothy discussed above, and she continued the family history of providing charity to a considerable degree, as the 'excess' of her estate amounted to £940.[1082] Her executors used the money to purchase an annuity of £55 from the Newcastle mayor and burgesses and this annual sum endowed a hospital for six poor widows of clergymen and merchants, built by the corporation in 1725. As we will see below, the merchant guilds offered help for members and their widows, but Ann evidently wanted to help other women through the widowhood she had experienced herself.

6.6 The Newcastle corporation, merchant guilds and the provision of charity

Many households in regular need of assistance made their livings from the coal trade, often as keelmen. It says a great deal about the unequal distribution of wealth in Newcastle that coal enriched the elite yet impoverished a far larger section of the town population in the form of the labouring classes. One implication this had on social relations was that the Hostmen had a strong interest in the welfare of the keelmen on whom they relied to transport coal downstream to awaiting ships. Many keelmen built a reasonable standard of living but their work was irregular, especially during the winter months when underemployment made heavy demands on household budgets.[1083] The common council provided extra employment in wintertime for those in need of work. Tasks included removing debris from the Tyne and clearing snow from the streets, as a number of keelmen and labourers 'depriv'd of following their several Occupations' by reason of the 'severe Frost' were so hired in the winter of 1739-

1080 C. H. Hunter Blair, 'The Merchant's Court, Newcastle upon Tyne', *AA*, Fourth Series, 17 (1941), 1-18.
1081 DUL, DPR/I/1/1719/D1/1-2.
1082 DUL, DPR/I/1/1696/D2/1; Mackenzie, *Descriptive and Historical Account*, vol. 1, 530.
1083 Burn, 'Seasonal Work', 157-182.

40.[1084] Occasionally financial assistance was offered to help those struggling through winter, as in January 1740 when the mayor and aldermen gave £50 towards the 'Hardships of the Poor' engendered by the cold weather.[1085] An unusually long winter only added to the burdens of the season and in late March 1729 town officials, recognising the 'Calamities which the Poor House-keepers … [had] been driven to by the length of the Sharp Winter-Season', offered £30 on behalf of the corporation; the clergy of the four parishes donated a further £182 18s (possibly parish donations passed on rather than individually) between them and merchant Sir Henry Liddell pledged £50.[1086] In total, £362 18s was provided on this occasion with the Hostmen offering £20 to specifically help the keelmen.

Sir Henry Liddell was only one merchant who offered informal charity to the poor during the winter months. In January 1740 coal was said to be 'as scarce with the Poor as Money' and in response Matthew Ridley donated some of his own supply. The *Newcastle Courant* solemnly informed its readers that 'had it not been for the Heaps of small Coals' Ridley gave 'to all poor People who would fetch [th]em … great Numbers of poor Families in Sandgate and other Places must have starv'd with the excessive Cold.'[1087] As we have seen, the Blackett family had a history of philanthropy in Newcastle and this continued with Walter Blackett, nephew to the Sir William Blackett whose funeral was discussed earlier. Known as the 'father of the poor', Walter served as a Newcastle MP between 1734 and 1777 and each Christmas made a donation to the poor. Taking 1748 as an example, this annual donation was received by '800 plus people' who attended his house in Newcastle where each was given a six pence loaf of bread, a piece of beef and six pence in cash.[1088] In February 1740, 'notwithstanding his annual Charity at Christmas', Walter donated a further 200 guineas 'in Compassion to the Crisis of the Poor', hailed by the *Newcastle Courant* as a 'laudable and glorious Example.'[1089]

From these various examples it would appear that the town felt a collective responsibility towards the poor. Certainly this was true to some extent, but town officials and merchants knew how important it was to protect the workforce the coal trade required. This is demonstrated with the practice of including winter loans in the bonds made between keelmen and fitters. Fitters were members of the Company of Hostmen employed by coal owners to

1084 Ibid; *NC* no. 769 Jan. 19, 1740.
1085 *NC* no. 770 Jan. 26, 1740.
1086 *NC* no. 214 Mar. 22, 1729.
1087 *NC* no. 770 Jan. 26, 1740.
1088 Sedgwick, *House of Commons 1715-54*, vol. 1; *NC* no. 2871 Dec. 24-31, 1748. For slight variation on this annual gift see, for example, *NC* no. 506 Jan. 4, 1735; *NC* no. 454 Jan. 5, 1734.
1089 *NC* no. 771, Feb. 2, 1740.

sell their coal to shipmasters and organise its transportation downstream in keel boats. The inclusion of a winter loan helped the keelmen remain solvent through the winter and on hand to meet spikes in demand that might occur at short notice.[1090] Without such measures in place the Hostmen would have found it difficult to keep a willing workforce content and ready to work when required. This goes to show how the interests of the Hostmen were aligned with those of the corporation, largely down to the fact that many town officials were Hostmen, as demonstrated earlier in the chapter.[1091] More generally we may say that the merchant monopoly of the bench of aldermen and the offices of mayor and sheriff injected a strong political and economic function into charity, adding to the sense that charity was about more than piety, good will or affirming social status. Without charity a flexible workforce would not have been available and coal merchants would have failed to meet demand. Social relations in the town were, therefore, mediated through the provision of charity: coal owners and merchants needed the keelmen who in turn depended on them not just for employment, but for extra help when work became sparse.

The political aspect of charity is further demonstrated in the early history of the Keelmen Hospital. Towards the end of the seventeenth century an increasing number of keelmen were settling in Newcastle in old age when they were unable to meet the physical demands of their former employment.[1092] In 1699 some of their representatives petitioned the Hostmen to make rules for the government of a charity to provide relief for the 'pinching want' many experienced, proposing that four pence per tide be deducted from each crew of a keel carrying between six and eight chaldrons of coal.[1093] The initial fund was soon devoted to building a hospital to house aged and infirm keelmen and their wives.[1094] Whether the idea for the hospital originated with the keelmen or the Hostmen is unclear, but its establishment in 1700 nevertheless demonstrates the importance of charity in the relationship between the two.[1095] Particularly noteworthy is the support the hospital received from prominent merchants, with Sir William Blackett attempting to get the keelmen's charity established by act of Parliament during his stint as MP for the town, a cause taken up by fellow merchant MP William Carr following the death of Blackett.[1096]

1090 Burn, 'Seasonal Work', 171-172.
1091 Ibid.
1092 Ibid., 169.
1093 Joseph M. Fewster, *The Keelmen of Tyneside: Labour Organisation and Conflict in the North-East Coal Industry, 1600-1830* (Woodbridge, 2011), 21.
1094 T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 444. The four pence 'towards the erecting & building' of the hospital was found to be insufficient and the company lent £200 to the project.
1095 Fewster, *Keelmen*, 21-22.
1096 Ibid., 24-26.

Despite the positive sentiments under which the hospital was established, control of it quickly became a political issue that hampered progress. By 1710 the keelmen were petitioning to govern the charity themselves, a move which would have required them to be incorporated as freemen. Defoe, who lived in Gateshead around this time, championed their cause but many Newcastle officials feared the repercussions of allowing the keelmen to become an independent corporation with access to funds, arguing this would lead to mutiny and tumult.[1097] Arguments about the allocation and collection of funds added yet more uncertainties over the future of the hospital and when a bill that would have given the Hostmen much control over the charity was rejected by Parliament, it was a hollow victory for the keelmen, as their bid to become freemen had failed. Defoe offered no further assistance.[1098] The whole episode shows that whilst charity was an important part of the relationship between Hostmen and keelmen, and one many felt a worthy cause, town officials remained mistrustful of the keelmen whom they regarded as a potential source of unrest. Giving the keelmen too much independence only made them more dangerous; charity was meant to keep them compliant and solvent, nothing more.

One final source of merchant charity came from the guilds. Guilds had a reciprocal relationship with members and in return for paying membership fees and obeying company rules they were entitled to help in times of need.[1099] Typical sums from the 1680s and 1690s include the £5 Isaac Simpson and John Scarth each received for their families and the £3 Robert Jenison and Thomas Curwen were awarded by the Merchant Adventurers.[1100] Some donations were so specific it seems probable they were intended to satisfy a particular debt, with James Mitford successfully applying to the Merchant Adventurers in 1679 for relief for 'himselfe and [his] Family' and receiving £6 13s 8d.[1101] Widows of members could also seek assistance. Mrs Pannell, a 'widow and sister' of the Hostmen, received £5 for herself and her children in 1691 and Mrs Lomax, another 'ancient sister' was granted forty shillings in 1680.[1102] Aside from the emotional impact of losing one's husband, the loss of income could pose a serious problem for women, especially those with children, and the option of seeking help from the guilds must have been welcomed.[1103]

1097 Ibid., Chs. 2-5.
1098 Ibid., 38.
1099 Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, 95-106.
1100 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 215; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 180; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 128; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 74.
1101 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 52-3.
1102 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 62; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 186.
1103 The aged and the widowed formed the bottom tier of the poor as those most likely in deed of constant support. See: Tom Arkell, 'The Incidence of Poverty in England in the Later Seventeenth Century', *Social History*, 12, 1 (1987), 23-47.

In recognition of the difficulties widows faced, in January 1725 the Hostmen ordered that £10 18s be 'distributed amongst … widows & children as the Governor & Stewards think stand most [in] need'; two years later £5 was pledged for the same purpose.[1104] The timing of these gifts suggests they were intended to help relieve the demands of winter, though requests for charity came throughout the year which indicates a proportion of claimants were suffering from more than seasonal poverty.[1105] The sums awarded to widows ranged considerably. Elizabeth Garnett appealed to the Merchant Adventurers for relief 'of her greate necessytys' and 'the Company takeing hir sad & deplorable condition into theire grave considerations' granted her forty shillings, while Ann Reay received £5 for 'maintainance of herselfe and [her] Five Children' and Mrs Harrison £10 towards alleviating her 'greate want.'[1106] Evidently each case was assessed on its own merits and assistance awarded accordingly. The guilds also made donations to institutions, some on a regular basis, as was the case with the master of the charity school of St Ann's parish who received £10 each year.[1107] Not all institutions were successful in their applications. In 1676 the Merchant Adventurers received a petition from Gosforth church 'wherein they humbly requested this Company for theire Charitable Assistance in granting them somewhat towards the repaire of theire Ancient and decayed Church', a request declined as the company felt 'such presidents might be of bad consequence'.[1108]

Though the merchant guilds could make large single gifts (the aforementioned £10 awarded to Mrs Harrison is particularly noticeable) these were the exception. Throughout 1710 the Hostmen only made charitable donations totalling £4 5s, although a further £2 was given to cover half the annual salary of the schoolmaster in Sandgate church.[1109] In 1721 the company laid out £10 for Sandgate and another £10 for 'the poor' while donations to the 'poor Brothers and Sisters of the Company' totalled £8 in 1737.[1110] Considering the potential demand for charity outlined above, these were only small offerings. But it should be noted that by the eighteenth century voluntary groups were assuming responsibility for arranging pensions and helping widows and orphans which means we should expect some decline in guild donations.[1111] The nature of charity was changing and that the merchant guilds offered

1104 T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 567; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f.711.
1105 See, for example, T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 74; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 128; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 215; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 180.
1106 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f.24; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f.110; T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f.13.
1107 T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 722; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 725; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 740; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 743; T&WA, GU/HO/1/2, f. 716.
1108 T&WA, GU/MA/2/1, f. 5.
1109 Dendy, *Records of the Company of Hostmen*, 253.
1110 Ibid., 254, 255.
1111 Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism?', 96.

support to several households each year shows they did not immediately relinquish their traditional role in promoting collectivism in urban society.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the merchant role in the Newcastle government had important implications for social relations in the town. Social relations were conditioned by the continued presence of the merchant elite in the sense that there was an expectation amongst those excluded from power that their interests—the 'ancient rights' of the town—would be defended against outside threats. Merchant MPs took this responsibility seriously and whilst they were generally inactive in parliamentary affairs, when it came to local issues they were far more assertive. Social relations were also underpinned by the expectation that the wealthier inhabitants would offer support to those in need. Here again merchants took their role seriously, helping to extend the provision of education in the town. Although fewer merchants made charitable bequests in their wills after around 1720, this likely has more to do with the changing nature of charity than its overall decline.

With respect to Ellis' argument that charity was offered to reduce the chance of social unrest, the evidence presented here shows this only partly explains the role it had in social relations. Extending education was a popular cause amongst merchants but this was not a quick solution to social upheaval. Arguably merchants believed a more literate and pious town would experience less internal dissent; if they did, this was a long-term solution and one that cannot be directly located in the evidence examined here.

Rather than relying on handouts to appease labouring groups like the keelmen, the elite knew that as long as they remained politically marginalised their ability to challenge the political order was severely limited. This added a political dimension to charity that can be seen with the early history of the Keelmen Hospital. Merchants like Blackett and Carr were outspoken in their support for the project yet most members of the corporation remained suspicious of the keelmen and opposed their attempts to become freemen. So whilst the Hostmen and the keelmen had a mutual need of one another, this relationship was carefully managed by the Hostmen to ensure the keelmen remained amenable yet politically marginalised. As the merchant elite monopolising the corporation only made up a small proportion of the occupational structure of Newcastle it was reluctant to enfranchise a much larger group. This alignment of interests between political power and guild control was the

main reason merchant guilds persisted in the town at a time when criticism of monopolies of all sorts was mounting throughout England.

Regarding the motives behind merchant charity, no single reason can be put forward in isolation of others. It would be naïve to see nothing but selflessness in acts of charity just as much as to would be overly cynical to claim the affirmation of social status was the only thing that drove people to offer support. The idea of having one's efforts hailed in the local newspaper as a 'laudable and glorious Example' must have appealed to plenty of wealthy merchants. But it was only one motive amongst several. A more pressing concern for Hostmen was to keep the keelmen solvent and in a position to survive periods of underemployment. In this regard the provision of relief and winter loans was about more than piety, good will or proving social status; it was a practical measure demanded by the coal trade to ensure the workforce was available when required.

Private charity offered in wills shows merchants helped further education in the town which connects them to the changing attitudes held towards poverty Slack sees in terms of a growing commitment to the 'improvement' of society. Caution does, however, need to be exercised when identifying pioneers of change. Bearing in mind the diverse range of motives behind charity, combined with the political and economic concerns occasioned by the coal trade, not all Newcastle merchants intentionally acted towards the shared goal of 'improvement.' Yet extending schooling in the town improved society by increasing literacy rates, regardless of why individuals gave to charity in the first place.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the social and cultural experience of becoming and being a merchant in Newcastle upon Tyne to see how it contributed towards the development of a merchant community in the town between 1660 and 1750. The findings make several original contributions to our knowledge of urban life and the communities to which people belonged and call for greater attention to be given to provincial merchants who have emerged as key agents in the development of early modern culture and society.

Arranging the chapters to broadly reflect stages in the lifecycle has shown community relations developed over time. Apprenticeship provided the initial integration into the merchant community. The occupational training taught the youth the mercantile culture of work and developed his identity as a merchant. The diary of Ralph Jackson (1736-1790) was used to examine this process in detail. Born in Richmond, North Yorkshire, Ralph moved to Newcastle in 1749 to commence his apprenticeship with Hostman William Jefferson. As was customary, Ralph lived with his master until he finished his training (in 1756), whereupon he left Newcastle. From the diary he kept we can see how, over time, Ralph became familiar with the friends and business associates of Jefferson. Frequently these friends and business contacts were one and the same and when visiting the household to discuss matters of trade they regularly stayed to dinner. Being included in these get-togethers helped Ralph feel part of his master's social network.[1112] Relatives of Ralph's master also offered support and Ralph frequently visited the home of his master's sister and struck up a friendship with her son Billy. This tells us that apprentices adjusted to urban life with help from a range of people connected to their master, including friends, business partners and kin. Taken together this household and social network provided instruction, companionship and emotional support for apprentices.

Assimilation also took place outside the household. Ralph frequently visited the local coffeehouse to read the newspapers where he would have encountered merchants and other apprentices. Information was central to the mercantile culture of work and coffeehouses were ideal venues in this respect, as not only were newspapers provided, but news quickly passed between merchants as they chatted and drank coffee. Early modern market relations

1112 See Chapter Two above, 46-54.

consisted of a web of obligations underpinned by trust. As men of business it was particularly important for merchants to establish and maintain personal bonds with their trading partners. Dining together and visiting the local coffeehouse were two ways these bonds were nurtured. Overall from Ralph's experience we can see how community bonds were connected to those that underpinned the 'economy of obligation', emphasising the point that the history of early modern market relations is very much a *social* history and the early modern economy a distinct economy from the later capitalist society of the nineteenth century.[1113]

The Newcastle Company of Merchant Adventurers also had a role in apprentice assimilation. Apprentices had to abide by company rules regarding clothing and the kind of social activities they could enjoy in their own time. Penalties were issued for those contravening these regulations and the evidence presented in Chapter Two suggests apprentices often challenged attempts to control their behaviour. That they did so highlights the contentious nature of assimilation and the negotiated element of community. Crucially, in seeking compliance with their rules the company stressed to apprentices that an individual's behaviour determined the overall reputation of the company. This line of reasoning goes to the heart of what it means to be part of a community: in a collective one is empowered but in return has a responsibility to act in the interests of the whole.

Masters were expected to ensure apprentices under their charge lived an obedient and moral life and this could also produce conflict, something we saw again with Ralph Jackson.[1114] However, while Ralph's spats with his master were fairly minor, a complete breakdown in master-apprentice relations could occur, as is evident from certain cases brought before the court of the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers.[1115] Enduring friendships could also develop and while difficult to document, some came to light in the examination of merchant wills.[1116] Bequests were one way of formally recognising social bonds that had developed between a master and apprentice. They provided social recognition for the apprentice, celebrating their ties to the adult mercantile world. Some apprentices acted as witnesses when masters made their wills and this would also have connected different generations of merchants. Social relations between masters and apprentices were characterised by this intergenerational transmission of values which underlines the crucial

1113 Craig Muldrew, 'Interpreting the Market: The Ethics of Credit and Community Relations in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 18, 2 (1993), 163-183. Also see Chapter One above, 4.
1114 See Chapter Two above, 43-44.
1115 See Chapter Two above, 43.
1116 See Chapter Two above, 44-45.

social dimension to apprenticeship. Essentially the social side of training was cyclical: apprentices were entering the adult world where they would be involved in supervising the next generation of merchants through adolescence.

In the overview of the historiography provided in Chapter One it was noted that scholars working on early modern English and European communities feel that in order to appreciate the dynamics of continuity and change across the period it is vital to understand how communities defined membership, organised themselves and interacted with other groups. This thesis highlights the need to include apprenticeship in this discussion. Apprenticeship only receives limited attention in relation to community in two key collective works on the topic, yet the findings of this thesis show it had a pivotal role in the development of communities.[1117] Apprenticeship brought migrants to towns and provided the crucial socialisation into the communities that formed the basis of urban life. Bearing in mind that the average apprentice was in his early teens when he commenced his training, after the minimum term of seven years—ten years in the case of the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers—the newly qualified youth had spent his formative years outside the family household. During this time the apprentice would have become accustomed to the domestic routine of his adoptive household and its standards of living. Merchant apprentices were invariably male which meant that as part of their occupational training they also learnt what it meant to be head of a household. When the apprentice finished his training he was in a position to set up an independent household with a family of his own, and whilst this was not necessarily in the same town within which he had trained, it was this earlier experience that informed him of his responsibilities. Familial connections were still crucial at this stage in the lifecycle. Parents and relatives often helped young couples set up home by giving them essential household goods, often family heirlooms that had sentimental value.[1118] Nevertheless, the fact remains that apprenticeship had a key role in the formation of urban communities by teaching youths the responsibilities of adulthood and the social expectations this status carried.

Another line of enquiry that emerges from this part of the thesis is how the decline of apprenticeship affected the development of local communities. Chapter Three demonstrated that between 1600 and 1750 long-distance apprentice migration to Newcastle became less common and the social base of recruits contracted as the proportion of gentlemen sending

1117 Karen E. Spierling and Michael J. Halverson, eds. *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon, 2016); Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington, eds. *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, place, Rhetoric* (Manchester, 2000).

1118 See Chapter Five above, 152-153.

their sons to Newcastle to train as merchants rose to the cost of those further down the social scale. Whilst these changes were affecting apprenticeship on a national level, studying the local perspective has enabled a closer view to be taken. The reduction in long-distance migration must have encouraged social solidarity within communities and strengthened family and clan ties. A link may also be drawn with urban rejuvenation in the late seventeenth century. Along with other English towns, Newcastle has been associated with the 'urban renaissance' and it may well be that civic pride became more pronounced as communities strengthened ties between members and, crucially, with their town, as the inflow of long-distance migrants reduced.[1119]

Regarding the social status of merchant apprentices, the data presented in Chapter Three conclusively shows that the Newcastle merchant community contained a much stronger gentry element at the end of the seventeenth century than it had at the start. As the term 'gentleman' came to be applied to a broad social strata during this time, a careful interpretation of the evidence is required. Some have claimed that 'status inflation' devalues data on the social origins of apprentices, believing so-called 'gentlemen' were actually 'pseudo-gentry': the leisured class of urban families who despite not having a landed estate claimed elite status on account of their style of living.[1120] A key group assuming gentry status were the urban bourgeoisie, the term used throughout this thesis to describe urban residents within the upper reaches of the middling sort. Crucially, this class met the established elite on their own terms; they did not mindlessly emulate their style of living (see below) and for this reason using the term 'pseudo-gentry' to describe them is potentially misleading. The approach advocated here is to connect the widening parameters of elite status with the formation of the genteel urban bourgeoisie. A further dimension to this claim is the greater esteem afforded to merchants and trade which raised the profile of 'bourgeois dignity' to something respectable offering economic benefits for the nation as a whole.[1121] A similar claim cannot be made for the leisured life of the 'pseudo-gentry'.

Chapter Three shows that over time the gentry became more involved in the Newcastle coal trade. As to why this was, the rising cost of apprenticeship in the seventeenth century effectively priced many households out of the market, leaving the prosperous to take up the most desirable openings, such as with the prestigious Merchant Adventurers.

1119 Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie, introduction to *Economy and Culture in North-East England, 1500-1800*, eds. Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie (Woodbridge, 2018). See also Chapter One above, 17-18

1120 See Chapter Three above, 73-74.

1121 Deidre McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (Chicago, 2010), 80, 402-403. See also Chapter Three above, 73-74, 82.

Furthermore, the economic expansion of England and the accompanying increase in trade and commerce meant high profits were on offer for successful merchants, further encouraging members of the gentry to consider a career in business. The tendency for perceptions of trade and merchants to become more positive as people came to appreciate the crucial role commerce had in national prosperity is significant again here. Many still regarded merchants with suspicion and the superiority of the landed classes was not seriously challenged. Yet that an increasing number of gentlemen were setting up as merchants indicates that the traditional view of gentility being incompatible with a life in trade was becoming less prevalent.[1122] Cultural change engendered economic change and vice versa in a process that was self-reinforcing: as more gentlemen apprenticed their sons to merchants this raised the profile of the occupation and encouraged others to follow suit. Gentlemen favoured the more prestigious companies like the Merchant Adventurers which contributed further towards the elite status of these organisations and enabled members to command the highest fees. Rising costs increased the domination of the gentry as less well-to-do households found the financial outlay prohibitively expensive and had to seek alternative openings.

The long-term implications for the Newcastle merchant community were far reaching. Migration connects communities to outside regions and helps determine their social and cultural makeup. As the social and geographical origins of apprentices shrank the merchant community became less diverse and more insular. Furthermore, as merchants dominated the corporation, this governing body became less reflective of Newcastle's social structure. Merchants accounted for just 4 percent of fathers listed in the parish registers for 1701-5, a tiny proportion compared to the 79 percent employed in transport and manufacturing (37 percent and 42 percent respectively).[1123] Coal was a very labour intensive mineral to extract and transport and its prominent position within the Newcastle economy determined its overall character, the 'process of precocious industrialisation' occasioned by the demand for coal resulting in Newcastle becoming 'a majority proletarian town.'[1124] Yet governing this burgeoning industrial centre was a ruling body drawn from a merchant community whose social base, as demonstrated in Chapter Three (Figure 3.2 and Table 3.1), was contracting, meaning over time the gulf separating members of the corporation from the bulk of the town population, in terms of social status, was widening.

1122 See Chapter Three above, 80-82.
1123 Andy Burn, 'Work Before Play: The Occupational Structure of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1710' in *Economy and Culture*, eds. Green and Crosbie, 123. See also Chapter Six above, 173-174.
1124 Burn, 'Work', 124.

Following on from the chapters looking at how people became part of the merchant community, Chapter Four began the investigation into how members approached urban living with a discussion of housing. The overall theme of this chapter was that housing offered a visual representation of the merchant community. The size and location of properties made statements about the occupants while the use of domestic space conveyed family values, such as the emphasis placed on sociability and entertaining. Data from the 1665 Hearth Tax were used to show how the size of the average merchant house compared to the town as a whole. Amongst the households liable for payment of the tax in Newcastle, just less than 36 percent had a single hearth and 22.6 percent had two. In contrast, Hostmen were typically assessed for 5.7 hearths and other merchants 4.3. Merchants serving as mayor tended to be the most wealthy and liable for the highest number of hearths, paying on average for 8.4.[1125] In the simplest terms these figures confirm that merchants tended to live in the larger properties of Newcastle. Interpreted more closely, they show how the coal trade, the lifeblood of Newcastle, created a wealthy minority, embodied in the merchant community, and a much larger labouring population. Not all labouring households existed in poverty. But many were close to its margins and periodically required parish relief, especially during the winter months. Overall the Hearth Tax data goes some way to describing how these very different relationships to the coal trade contributed to the architectural development of Newcastle.

The size of merchant properties was further explored in Chapter Four in terms of the number of rooms they contained. These data were particularly revealing for showing that the merchant community was hierarchical in nature. Properties varied considerably in size, some having a couple of rooms, others as many as eleven.[1126] As with the number of hearths, the correlation between the size of a property and the wealth and status of the occupants is not exact. Even so, the relationship is clear enough, and the broad range in the data relating to room numbers can be said to reflect the spectrum of wealth found within the Newcastle merchant community. It was a community in the sense that it had common goals and interests with respect to trade, yet when it came to the profits of trade, these were not shared equally.

This point was reinforced with regards the location of merchant properties. Wealthier merchants tended to live around Sandhill and Pilgrim Street, creating a ‘merchant area’ of Newcastle singled out by contemporaries as the most affluent district of the town. This confirms that the merchant community was identifiable from its housing, though the picture was not a static one. By the time Bourne was writing his account of Newcastle in the 1730s

1125 See Chapter Four above, 110-111, 114.
1126 See Chapter Four above, 117.

merchants had started to move away from the crowded centre to the quieter suburbs, reflecting the process taking place amongst the urban middle classes in other English towns at this time. In this sense merchants introduced this trend to Newcastle and living away from the bustling town centre became a mark of status associated with wealth.

Arguably this outward migration compromised the merchant community by extending its geographical spread across the town. But as many merchant households shared a common approach to urban life the associational nature of the community did not disappear. This aspect of bourgeoisie cultural life was discussed in Chapter Five. Whilst the chapter drew on the literature of the consumer debate, the chief aim was to go beyond the discussion and view consumers as households rather than individuals. It was argued that concentrating on high value luxury consumer goods associated with status overlooks the extent to which the ownership of everyday conveniences increased. Taking the kitchen as an example, it was shown that goods associated with fulfilling the ideals of 'good huswifery' formed a key part of merchant material culture. Living standards rose not just because the ownership of luxury goods increased but due to the fact families acquired technologies that eased day-to-day living, thereby improving household conditions for the *whole* family. Making this argument is not to overlook the significance of middling households owning luxury goods that, prior to the mid-seventeenth century, had been enjoyed by only the very wealthy. Indeed, it was partly the acquisition of these items that provided merchants with higher living standards in Newcastle. What is more, by the eighteenth century these standards were on the rise, with clocks, pictures, walnut furniture, corner cupboards, window curtains, armchairs and cutlery all becoming more commonly owned. Tea was also consumed widely in the merchant community by the eighteenth century, and together with the prevalence of glassware, table linen and cutlery, indicates a more civilised approach to dining was being adopted. Crucially, not all merchant households acquired these items. From the evidence presented in Chapter Five there is a definite sense that whilst living standards were generally higher for Newcastle merchants compared to the rest of the town, a minority led the way when it came to following the latest fashions and tastes. To a large extent this describes how households engaged selectively with changing trends, exercising personal choice and preference when it came to deciding what goods to buy. But it is important not to overlook the significance of wealth. However much adopting the latest fashions expressed taste and refinement, households needed sufficient wealth to do so. Once again this demonstrates the hierarchical nature of the merchant community.

For those merchant households that did follow the latest trends, we can connect them to the wider bourgeois culture that emphasised politeness and respectability. Barry claims that association was central to the value system of the bourgeoisie, as it underpinned their collectivism, and this study proposes that the consumption of material culture is one example of how this association functioned on an everyday basis.[1127] The material possessions merchant households used as they went about daily living—cooking, eating, sleeping, entertaining and so on—amounted to a style of living that was different from that of large sections of the Newcastle population yet similar to bourgeois households in other English towns. This leads to the issue of class. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, England did not have the bourgeoisie in the form it took in the nineteenth century. What the period did have was the making of the middle classes, and from the Newcastle experience we can see how provincial merchants featured, in this instance with material culture. This highlights the cultural significance of Newcastle and challenges claims made by Earle. Earle has charted the emergence of the London middle classes over the comparable timeframe of 1660-1730 and prefaces his account by rebuking historians who 'play down the significance of London and … insist on a broad development of English economy and society in which provincial enterprise is seen as equally important to that of the metropolis'. This may have been the case after the 1730s, but for his chosen period it was 'certainly not true'.[1128] While Earle is quite correct that London operated on a scale far beyond any provincial town, in light of the evidence presented here his assertion that 'London totally dominated English urban culture and indeed invented it' seems overstated.[1129] Unlike places such as Durham and York, Newcastle was not a polite town, rather one centred on the coal industry. Coal scarcely escapes mention in any account of early modern Newcastle and while certainly justified to some degree, we should not allow the economic foundation of the town to overshadow its cultural life. Tracing the emergence of the middle classes needs to be done with reference to provincial urban centres; London may have dominated England in many ways but it was also amongst the middling sort in towns like Newcastle that certain ideals and values coalesced into what would come to be the middle class way of life.

Nor should we limit our gaze to England. Hodge argues that in colonial America the middle classes emerged from the 'Genteel Revolution' that commenced in the early

1127 Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort', in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke, 1994), 84-112. Also see Chapter One above, 5-6.

1128 Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Classes: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, 1989), preface.

1129 Ibid.

eighteenth century as the middling sorts became invested in emergent genteel values, a process mediated by consumable goods. As was the case in the households of English merchants in places like Newcastle, behaviours and tastes condensed and over time came to underpin the middle class style of life. Standards included being clean, polite and well-dressed for formal occasions; timekeeping; setting the table for dining; keeping certain rooms for particular occasions; expressing aspirations through material objects and ascribing specific household roles for men and women.[1130] Rather than concentrating on London alone to explain the emergence of the middle classes as Earle does, a better approach would be to look beyond the metropolis to the provinces, and further to Europe and America. Provincial merchants were far from insignificant in the transformation of European and colonial society occasioned by the emergence of the middle classes; their experience represents in microcosm what was happening on a far greater scale and they should not be overlooked in our haste to see London as the unique engine room of social and economic change.

Overall the findings of this section of the thesis help fill a gap in the early modern historiography that was brought to attention in Chapter One. It was explained that merchants tend to feature in studies whose prime focus is trade and economic development. When merchants appear in social histories they usually do so as part of the middling sorts rather than as a distinct group, making their contribution to the development of culture and society difficult to assess. There is a need to reconsider this approach. Merchants were key figures in the urban renaissance which saw Newcastle acquire a range of leisure facilities in the century after 1660, particularly regarding the advancing level of domestic comfort and architectural change.[1131] Historians have paid much attention to the economic development of early modern Newcastle but having more studies on the cultural side of urban life would show the town was about more than coal. Important work has already been done that reveals Newcastle as a crucial site of cultural consumption associated with the formation of regional and national identity.[1132] This thesis contributes by highlighting the role merchants had in establishing Newcastle as the leading cultural centre in the northeast.

1130 Christina J. Hodge, *Consumerism and the Emergence of the Middle Class in Colonial America* (Cambridge, 2014), preface, xvii-xviii.

1131 Adrian Green, 'The Big House in the English Provincial Town', in *The English Urban Renaissance Revisited*, eds. John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (Cambridge, 2018), 116-143.

1132 Green and Crosbie, eds. *Economy and Culture*; Helen Berry, 'Promoting Taste in the Provincial Press: National and Local Culture in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 25 (2002), 1-17; Berry, Helen and Jeremy Gregory, eds. *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830* (Aldershot, 2004).

A further implication for studies of early modern culture is that the mercantile class was not culturally inferior to the gentry, whom it is often assumed it tried to emulate.[1133] One common argument is that merchants were chiefly concerned with acquiring sufficient wealth to buy a landed estate and establish themselves amongst the ranks of the landed gentry. But whilst it is true that by 1660 there was already a history of Newcastle merchants buying properties and land in County Durham, this was done as a business investment rather than to mimic the landed gentry.[1134] Chapter Five argues for a similar case with material culture. Newcastle merchants did not try to appropriate the style of living favoured by the gentry. Certainly some bought estates but most remained urban residents and their material culture had more in common with the urban bourgeoisie than the local gentry. Writing of the seventeenth century, Grassby argues that '[i]n contrast to the gentry merchants had a marginal interest in interior decoration and were less inclined to express their status through domestic artefacts.' He concludes that '[t]heir taste was conformist, functional and unrefined.'[1135] The findings of this thesis challenge this view and encourage a more nuanced reading of the evidence that shows provincial merchants at the forefront of changing patterns of consumer demand. As explained above, this cultural change was taking place in Europe and colonial America. That this was the case sites Newcastle and its merchant community in a European and Atlantic context, meaning the findings of this thesis offer more than a local history. The regional perspective is crucial to understanding economic change and how a variety of experiences constitute the whole.[1136] Yet it is also the case that taking a much wider view can help uncover the interconnectedness of the early modern world.

The final chapter shifted focus to political participation. Continuing the theme of stages in the lifecycle, merchants typically became politically active once they had a household and family of their own and were established in their careers. A defining feature of the Newcastle merchant community was its strong connection to the town corporation and by examining this closely Chapter Six builds on Wilson's study of popular politics in provincial English towns.[1137] Together with Norwich, Wilson uses Newcastle as a case study and puts forward the argument that townsfolk had a genuine concern for English prosperity which manifested itself in the desire to influence national affairs. Crucially, despite the

1133 See Chapter One above, 15-16.

1134 A. T. Brown, *Rural Society and Economic Change in County Durham: Recession and Recovery, c.1400-1640* (Woodbridge, 2015), Ch.5.

1135 Richard Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1995), 341. Also see Chapter One above, 15-16.

1136 Keith Wrightson, foreword to *Economy and Culture*, eds. Green and Crosbie, xiv.

1137 Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995).

presence of the entrenched merchant oligarchy, 'the people' had agency. They formulated their own opinions regarding trade and empire—perceived as the foundation of national wealth—and used the authority of the oligarchy to promote causes they valued. Social relations in Newcastle were, therefore, more complex than a rich minority lording it over the rest of the population who were unable to act independently. In contrast, the bonds of oligarchy could be circumvented by 'the people' who were able to 'transform themselves into citizens through their actions in the public sphere.'[1138]

Taking the topic further, Chapter Six explained how political relations between the merchant oligarchy and 'the people' were conditioned by this unequal balance of power. Merchants monopolised the town government across the period under study which drew much criticism from those excluded from power. One of the main reasons why the merchants retained control in the face of opposition was because they positioned themselves as the defenders of Newcastle's much cherished rights to trade on the Tyne. The evidence examined showed that this was not mere rhetoric as Newcastle merchant MPs were active in promoting local affairs and defending the town from outside threats. Social relations between the ruling merchant elite and the rest of the townsfolk were conditioned by this understanding that the elite, however powerful, had an obligation to defend collective interests.

This relationship was examined more closely through charity. Charity was a feature of civic governance that invoked notions of community. It cemented the good fellowship of the bourgeoisie and 'displayed their capacity to overcome the temptations of possessive individualism'. Charity also confirmed the status of the giver as an independent citizen; whereas the bourgeoisie found support amongst themselves, the poor depended on others.[1139] This reliance by the poor on civic leaders for relief meant hierarchies were legitimised, further strengthening notions of community.[1140] For Ellis, charity in Newcastle was a prudent measure to offset potential societal unrest occasioned by the highly uneven distribution of wealth and power.[1141] Testing this hypothesis has shown that this can only be viewed as one motive amongst many. Merchant charity was often directed towards the provision of education in the town which cannot have been regarded as a quick solution to appease the disaffected. Raising literacy rates offered long-term economic benefits which as a motive behind charity is closer to Slack's point that charity was evolving through a growing

1138 Ibid, 437.
1139 Barry, 'Bourgeoisie Collectivism?', 99.
1140 Phil Withington, 'Citizens, Community and Political Culture in Restoration England', in *Communities*, eds. Shepard and Withington, 137.
1141 Joyce Ellis, 'A Dynamic Society: Social Relations in Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1660-1760', in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1984), 190-227.

commitment to the 'improvement' of society.[1142] This is not to deny Ellis's argument. The Hostmen needed the keelmen to be a flexible workforce capable of surviving periods of underemployment that came about through the rhythms of the coal trade. It was with this end in mind that Hostmen offered keelmen winter loans to ensure they endured the slack winter months and were on hand to recommence work at short notice. Particularly harsh winters often encouraged merchants or the corporation itself (which was largely composed of Hostmen anyway) to offer further charity to the keelmen. Whilst there is no reason to doubt that many civic leaders had genuine concern for those in need, at the same time they must have seen charity as a placatory measure. This aspect of the relationship between the Hostmen and the keelmen was further explored with the early history of the Keelmen Hospital. Leading merchants actively supported the venture but when it was suggested that control of the hospital pass to the keelmen, there was much opposition because in order for this to happen the keelmen would have had to be granted the status of freemen. Giving political rights to a large section of the labouring classes found little support amongst the merchant elite. This uncovers the basis of the relationship merchants had with the keelmen: they were to be kept compliant and solvent yet politically marginalised.

This refusal to extend the franchise helped the elite retain their stranglehold on the town government. More specifically, it was the continued existence of the merchant guilds that preserved monopolistic control. The gradual demise of European guilds has received much attention from early modern historians. One point that emerges clearly is that the rate of decline varied considerably between towns and regions. Work by King confirms that Newcastle guilds were particularly long-lived yet surprisingly few scholars offer a reason as to why this might be. Chapter Six proposed that guilds provided the merchant elite with the means to maintain control over the corporation. The companies of Merchant Adventurers and Hostmen offered a convenient way of exploiting the convoluted electoral process to the benefit of members and for this reason they endured well into the eighteenth century.

The final point to consider is how far we can consider the experience of Newcastle and its merchant community as typical. Merchant elites were a feature of many early modern towns.[1143] Particularly striking are the comparisons that can be drawn between Newcastle and Bristol. In both towns a powerful merchant community was drawn together through a common purpose, with merchant guilds giving it coherence.[1144] Like Bristol, Newcastle also

1142 See Chapter Six above, 200-202, 208, 216.
1143 See Chapter Six above, 179-181.
1144 David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (Berkeley, 1991), 68-72, 89-101. See also Chapter One above, 3-4.

inherited its guild infrastructure from the medieval period. Yet, crucially, this gave both towns a very different trajectory to their development than was the case in newer towns like Manchester and Sunderland, which developed without pre-existing urban infrastructures.[1145] In other ways Newcastle was dissimilar to Bristol: economically Newcastle was rooted in the coal trade (particularly with London) whereas Bristol expanded through the Atlantic colonial trade, meaning the merchant communities in each town were engaged in very different areas of commerce. Coal is in fact the key reason why Newcastle is exceptional to many early modern English towns: the London coal trade meant Newcastle developed in the late seventeenth century whereas other provincial centres tended to grow more in the eighteenth century relative to London.[1146]

More commonalities can be drawn out when it comes to thinking about how different urban communities had a similar approach to urban life. This aspect of urban communities has been the core theme of this thesis. That similarities existed between locations means its conclusions hold significance for different towns, not just in England but those in Europe and colonial America. Throughout these regions, culture and communities were generated in urban contexts undergoing particular trajectories occasioned by the specialisation of the early modern commercial economy. Ideally each location should to be assessed on its own terms whilst recognising similarities existed between regions and countries. By adopting this approach we can bring to light the role merchants had in the emergence of the modern world from its medieval roots.

1145 Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, 'Parish, River, Region and Nation: Networks of Power in Eighteenth-Century Wearside', in *Economy and Culture*, eds. Green and Crosbie, 230-249.

1146 E. A. Wrigley, 'Urban Growth in Early Modern England: Food, Fuel and Transport', *P&P*, 225 (2014), 79-112.

Appendix 1: Transcript of the Inventory of Jonathan Roddam's Library, 1712[1147]

A Catalogue of his books appraised by the rev[r]end M[r] Leonard Shafto

Folios

	[£]	[s]	[d]	
Heylins Cosmography[1148]		7	6	
Harris[s] Voige vol 1:2[1149]			15	0
D[oc]tor Taylors[1150] life & Cave of the Appostles[1151]		10	0	
A Dutch bible[1152]		1	0	0
Willetts[1153] Comment on the Old Testam[t]		2	0	
Blomes Geographicall descript[i]on of the World[1154]		1	6	
The History of the World[1155]		2	6	
Cowleys works[1156]		3	0	
The World of words[1157]			2	6
Felthams Resolves[1158]		1	6	
Guillims Display of Heraldry[1159]		1	0	
Nichols on the Comon prayer[1160]		10	0	
D[oc]tor Horneck on the old Testam[t][1161]		10	0	

1147 DUL, DPR/I/1/1712/R20/3-5. Inventory dated Sep. 2, 1712.

1148 Peter Heylyn, *Cosmographie in Four Books Containing the Chronographie and Historie of the Whole World* (1657).

1149 John Harris, *Navigantiumatque Itinerantium Bibliotheca; or, A Compleat Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1705).

1150 Jeremy Taylor, Church of Ireland bishop of Down Connor. Religious writer with a reputation for toleration, expounded in his early work *The Liberty of Prophesying*. See: John Spurr, 'Taylor, Jeremy (bap. 1613, d. 1667)', *ODNB*.

1151 Probably *Antiquitates Christianae, or, The History of the Life and Death of the Holy Jesus: as also the Lives, Acts and Martyrdoms of his Apostles* (1675), the fifth edition of Jeremy Taylor's 1649 work *The Great Exemplar of Sanctity and Holy Life*, a biography of Christ with prayers and discourses which enables readers to follow his example. William Cave added to *Antiquitates Christianae* (including the introduction) and the work was dedicated to Nathanael Crewe, bishop of Durham. See: Gretchen E. Minton 'Cave, William (1637–1713)', *ODNB*.

1152 See *n.* 59 below.

1153 Possibly Andrew Willett (1562-1621), a Church of England clergyman and religious controversialist who published several bible commentaries. See: Anthony Milton, 'Willet, Andrew (1561/1-1621)', *ODNB*.

1154 Richard Blome was a cartographer who published various collections of maps.

1155 Sir Walter Raleigh, various editions.

1156 Abraham Crowley, poet. *Works* was published in 1668.

1157 Possibly John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words, or Dictionarie of the Italian and English Tongues* (1611) or Edward Philips, *The New World of English Words, or, A General Dictionary Containing the Interpretations of Such Hard Words as are Derived From Other Languages* (1656).

1158 Owen Feltham, *Resolves Divine, Moral, Political*. 8th ed. published 1661.

1159 John Guillim, *A Display Heraldrie* (1610).

1160 Will Nichols, *A Comment on the Book of Common Prayer* (1710).

1161 *The History of the Old and New Testament* (1697) to which the Church of England clergyman Anthony Horneck contributed.

Lodges Josephus[1162]	2	0
Bishop Sandersons Sermons[1163]	4	0
Quartos		
Prestons new Covenant[1164] 2 vol	1	0
Venners via recta[1165]	0	6
Octavos		
Kennetts Roman Antiquities[1166]	1	6
Blancourts Art of Glass[1167]	0	6
Scotts Christian life vol 1[1168]	1	6
Comber on the Comon prayer[1169]	1	6
A Country parsons Advice to his parishoners[1170]	1	0
Nichols Conference with a Theist vol 1:2:3:4[1171]	6	0
The Gentlemans calling[1172]	0	6
Bunnys Christian exercise[1173]	0	6
Goodmans old Religion[1174]	0	6
A Conference between an alderman & a vicar[1175]	0	6
Baxters direct[i]ons to a sound covercon[1176]	0	3

1162 Thomas Lodge, *The Famous and Memorable Workes of Josephus* published 1602. A translation offering English readers 'the works of Josephus as a defence of Catholic understandings of Christian history and theology'. See: Erin E. Kelly, 'Jewish History, Catholic Argument: Thomas Lodge's *Workes of Josephus* as a Catholic Text', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 34, 4 (2003), 993-1010.

1163 Robert Sanderson (1587-1663), bishop of Lincoln and doctrinal Calvinist. He supported the reformation of manners and had much in common with puritans, though throughout his life he rejected puritan arguments against ceremonies. Various collections of Sanderson's sermons were published, the first in 1622. See: J. Sears McGee 'Sanderson, Robert (1587–1663)', *ODNB*.

1164 John Preston, *The New Covenant* (1629). Treatise on prayer.

1165 Tobias Venner, physic. *Via Recta ad Vitam Longam* (1620) offers a discourse on health and the effects of diet, sleep and exercise.

1166 Basil Kennet, *Romae Antiquae: or, the Antiquities of Rome* (1696).

1167 Jean Haudicquer de Blancourt, *Art of Glass* (1699). Manual on glassmaking.

1168 John Scott, *The Christian Life* (1681). Devotional work on prayer and godly living.

1169 Thomas Comber, *A Discourse Concerning the Daily Frequenting the Common Prayer* (1687).

1170 Anon, published 1680. Advice on living a godly and virtuous life.

1171 William Nicholls, published 1697-8. Defence of Christian religion against 'infidels.'

1172 Richard Allestree, published in 1660. Conduct book.

1173 Edmund Bunny, Church of England clergyman and theological writer. *A Book of Christian Exercise* (1584) was a devotional work that 'represented a radical departure from contemporary protestant devotional writing'. See: William Joseph Sheils, 'Bunny, Edmund (1540–1618),' *ODNB*.

1174 John Goodman, *The Old Religion Demonstrated in its Principles* (1684). Offers advice on living a 'holy and comfortable Life.'

1175 Thomas Pittis, *A Private Conference Between a Rich Alderman and a Poor Country Vicar Made Publick* (1670).

1176 Richard Baxter, *Directions and Perswasions to a Sound Conversion* (1658). Baxter advocated reading as a means to conveyance, remaining sceptical of the idea that a profound conversion experience was evidence of election. See: N. H. Keeble, 'Baxter, Richard (1615-1691)', *ODNB*.

Ross[s] poeticus[1177]	0	3	
The whole duty of Man[1178]	1	0	
Seidens Key to History[1179]	0	3	
Evelins publick employment[1180]	0	6	
Count de Rochforts Memoirs[1181]	1	0	
Hudibrass 3[d] & last part[1182]	1	0	
Reynors p[r]cepts for Christian practise[1183]	0	4	
Binnings principle of Christian Religion[1184]	0	6	
An Account of Denmark[1185]	0	6	
Bacons Essays[1186]	0	11	
An Account of the river Nile[1187]	0	2	
Anchoranus Porta Linguarum[1188]	0	2	
Turners Practise of Religion[1189]		1	0
Discourse of trade & Coin[1190]	0	6	
Burnetts Tracts[1191]	1	0	
His[1192] History of the Reformat[i]on[1193]		2	0

1177 Alexander Ross, Church of England clergyman and writer on philosophy. *Mystagogvs Poeticus, or, The Muses Interpreter* (1647) was part of Ross's attempt to 'evaluate Stoical morality and metaphysics in a modern Christian context.' See: David Allan, 'Ross, Alexander (1591-1654)', *ODNB*.

1178 Richard Allestree, published 1657. Popular manual on behaviour, morality and devotion.

1179 Johann Sleidan (1506-56), described as 'the father of Reformation history', Sleidan was a 'passionate' Luther and pioneering in his use of European archives. *The Key to History* offers an interpretation of universal history and served as a university textbook well into the eighteenth century. See: Donald R. Kelly, 'Johann Sleidan and the Origins of History as a Profession', *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1980), 573-598.

1180 John Evelyn, *Publick Employment and an Active Life with all its Appanages … Prefer'd to Solitude* (1667). Evelyn's contribution to the literary dispute he had with Sir George Mackenzie on whether public life was preferable to solitude. See: Douglas D. C. Chambers, 'Evelyn, John (1620-1706)', *ODNB*.

1181 Gatien Courtilz de Sandras, *The Memoirs of the Count De Rochefort* (1696).

1182 Samuel Butler, poet. *Hudibras: the Third and Last Part* (1678).

1183 Edward Reyner, published 1644/5. Handbook for Christian living that ran to thirteen editions. See: Claire Cross, 'Reyner, Edward (1600-1660), *ODNB*.

1184 Hugh Binning, Church of Scotland minister. *The Common Principles of Christian Religion Clearly Proved* (1659) is a collection of Binning's sermons published posthumously by Patrick Gillespie. See: Paul Tomassi 'Binning, Hugh (1627–1653)' *ODNB*.

1185 Robert Molesworth, *An Account of Denmark as it was in the Year 1692* (1694).

1186 Published in 1597 by the philosopher Francis Bacon. The *Essays* cover many topics about private and public life.

1187 Jerónimo Lobo, *A Short Relation of the River Nile of its Source and Curent* (1673).

1188 Johannes Comenius's *Porta Linguarum*. On Latin translation. Translated by John Anchoran in 1631; by 1685 it had reached thirty-one editions. See: M. Greengrass, 'Comenius, Johannes Amos [Jan Amos Komenský] (1592–1670)', *ODNB*.

1189 Possibly John Turner, *The Sincere and Zealous Practice of Religion* (1701).

1190 John Pollexfen, *A Discourse of Trade and Coyn* (1697).

1191 Gilbert Burnet, bishop of Salisbury and historian. Burnet published several books with 'tracts' in their title and it is unclear which is listed here but would most likely have consisted of various historical documents.

1192 I.e. Burnet as above.

1193 *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*. Volumes one and two appeared in 1679 and 1681 followed by a third in 1714. Burnet was the first to attempt to write a history of the Reformation from original sources. See: Martin Grieg, 'Burnet, Gilbert (1643-1715), *ODNB*.

An Account of Sweeden[1194]	0	6
A poem of the Age[1195]	0	4
Langhams duty on Merchandize[1196]	1	0
Gentleman instructed[1197]	1	0

Duodecimos

Augustus[1198]	0	1
Fathers blessing to his son[1199]	0	2
Michiavells Prince[1200]	0	2
A Philosophicall Essay by S:W:[1201]	0	4
A Latin Testament	0	1
Garbart against Drunkards[1202]	0	1
Bolton on the Sacrament[1203]	0	1
A pamphlett about the Subsidy of Tonnage & Poundage[1204]	0	2
Another about the coming of God &c Anno 1658:	0	1
Pamphletts & Sermons	5	0
Twenty eight dutch books[1205]	5	0

1194 John Robinson, *An Account of Sueden* (1694).

1195 Possibly John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, *An Essay Upon Satyr, or, A Poem on the Times* (1680).

1196 Thomas Langham, *The Neat Duties (all Discounts and Abatements Deducted) of all Merchandize Specify'd in the Book of Rates* (1708).

1197 William Darrell, *A Gentleman Instructed in the Conduct of a Virtuous and Happy Life* (1707).

1198 Possibly Peter Heylyn, *Augustus. Or, An Essay of those Meanes and Counsels, Whereby the Commonwealth of Rome was Altered, and Reduced unto a Monarchy* (1632).

1199 Anon, *The Father's Blessing, or Counsell to His Sonne*, 4th ed. Published 1621. Anonymous adaption of James I's *Basilikon Doron* written for his son Henry.

1200 Italian political treatise first published in the sixteenth century by the diplomat Machiavelli.

1201 Unidentified.

1202 Probably Richard Garbutt, *One Come from the Dead, to Awaken Drunkards and Whoremongers: being a Sober and Severe Testimony Against the Sins and the Sinners* (1675).

1203 Robert Bolton, *A Three-Fold Treatise Containing the Saints Sure and Perpetuall Guide … Or, Meditations, Concerning the Word, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and Fasting* (1634).

1204 Pamphlets were often found as part of personal libraries. See: David Pearson, 'Patterns of Book Ownership in Late Seventeenth-Century England', *The Library*, 7, 11 (2010).

1205 It was not unusual for English merchants to gain some familiarity with the Dutch language to facilitate their trading. See Christopher Joby, *The Dutch Language in Britain (1550-1702): A Social History of the Use of Dutch in Early Modern Britain* (Boston, 2015), 133, 197-200.

	1660		1661	1673		1679		1680	1681	1685	1689	1690	1695	1698
	Apr.	Aug	Apr.	Dec.	Feb.		Sep.	Dec.	Feb.	Mar.	Jan.	Mar.	Oct.	Aug.
	C*	B[1206]	C	B[1207]	C		C	B[1208]	C	C	C	C	C	C
Robert Ellison b. Feb. 1614—d.1678														
William Calverley b. circa 1622—d.1660														
Sir John Marlay b. Oct. 1590—d.1673														
Sir Francis Anderson b. Dec. 1614—d.1679														
Sir William Blackett b. circa 1620—d.1680														
Sir Nathaniel Johnson b. circa 1645—d.1713														
Sir Ralph Carr b. July 1634—d.1710														
Sir William Blackett b. June 1657—d.1705														
William Carr b. Dec. 1644—d.1720														

*Letters give type of election: C=Constituency; B=By-election; P=Petition

Sources: Basil Duke Henning, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons1660-1690*, vols. 1, 3 (London, 1983); Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley & D.W. Hayton, *The History of Parliament: The* House *Commons 1690-1715*, vols. 1, 3, 5 (Cambridge, 2002); Romney Sedgwick, *The History of Parliament: The House Of Commons 1715-1754*, vols. 1-2 (London, 1970)

Appendix 2: Newcastle MPs 1660-1750

1206 Henry Anderson *vice* William Calverly *deceased*.
1207 William Blackett *vice* John Marlay *deceased*.
1208 Nathaniel Johnson *vice* William Blackett *deceased*.

	1701		1702	1705	1706	1708	1710	1713	1715	1722	1727	1729	1734	1741	1747
	Jan.	Dec.	Aug.	Jun.	Jan.	Jun.	Nov.	Sep.	Feb.	Apr.	Sep.	Mar.	May	May	Jun.
Sir William Blackett b. June 1657—d.1705	C	C	C	C	B[1209]	C	C	C	C	C	C	P[1210]	C	C	C
Sir Henry Liddell b. circa 1644—d.1723															
William Carr b. Dec. 1644—d.1720															
Sir William Blackett b. Feb. 1690—d.1728															
William Wrightson b. circa 1676—d.1760															
William Carr d.1742															
Nicholas Fenwick b. circa 1693—d.1752															
Sir Walter Blackett b. Dec. 1707—d.1777															
Matthew Ridley b. Nov. 1711—d.1778															

1209 Henry Liddell *vice* William Blackett *deceased*.
1210 William Carr *vice* William Blackett on petition.

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Merchant Adventurers Company Books 1675-1837
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Merchant Adventurers, Admissions 1737-1875
Merchant Adventurers Charter and Acts Book c.1656-1700
Merchant Adventurers Accounts 1668-1845

GU/HO (part MF), 298 DF/HUG/184:

Hostmen Minutes 1599/1600-1975
Hostmen Admissions c.1600-1911
Hostmen Apprenticeship Indentures 1709-1822

DT.TUR/4/976/4. Photograph showing Bessie Surtees House, Sandhill, Newcastle upon Tyne, April 1958

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